

ENGLAND FROM  
WORDSWORTH TO  
DICKENS

*By*  
R.W. KING



ENGLISH LIFE IN  
ENGLISH LITERATURE





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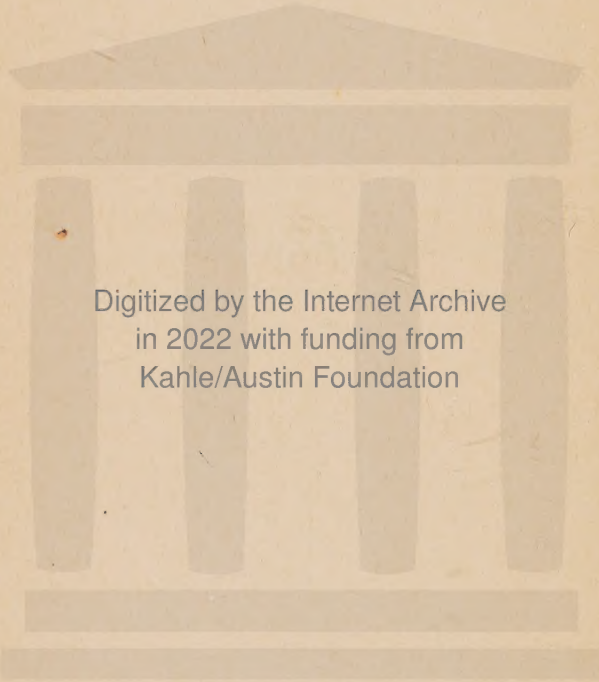
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ENGLAND FROM WORDSWORTH  
TO DICKENS

## ENGLISH LIFE IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

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6. **England from Wordsworth to Dickens.** By R. W. KING, M.A., Lecturer in English, University College of North Wales, Bangor.

# ENGLAND FROM WORDSWORTH TO DICKENS

BY

R. W. KING, M.A

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UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF NORTH WALES, BANGOR

'Such is human life ; so gliding on,  
It glimmers like a meteor, and is gone !  
Yet is the tale, brief though it be, as strange,  
As full, methinks, of wild and wondrous change,  
As any that the wandering tribes require,  
Stretched in the desert round their evening fire ;  
As any sung of old, in hall or bower,  
To minstrel-harps at midnight's witching hour !'

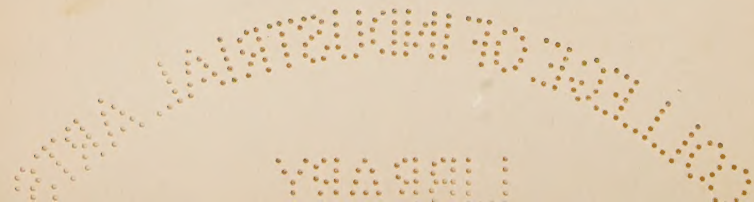
(Samuel Rogers, *Human Life*, 1819)



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## INTRODUCTION

IT might, perhaps, reasonably be said that an anthology of this kind requires no introduction. At any rate, if the present collection does not explain itself, nothing that can here be said will save it from failure in its chief aim, which is to give a description of the period in the actual words of men and women who lived through it. And so the purpose of this 'introduction' (which should perhaps be printed at the end of the book) is less to introduce than to define and justify the method here adopted of depicting the social environment in which our great artists, statesmen, and men of action lived and worked.

That the imaginative literature of an age is one source for the history of the age might seem to be axiomatic; yet arguments are not lacking on the other side. 'Literature', says a witty writer on the theme *Literature No 'Document'*,<sup>1</sup> 'reflects the taste of the time rather than the time itself, and often the two are widely different. . . . Literature is, of course, not life, neither history nor material for history, but a scroll where are traced and charactered the unfettered thoughts of writer and reader, a life within life, fancy somewhat at odds with fact. But by critics and historians this is often forgotten—"to pass from the art of a time to the time itself"', says Oscar Wilde, "is the great mistake that all historians commit.'" This is true, and gives a timely warning for the compilers (and for the readers too) of such books as this. But it is true only within somewhat narrow limits. No doubt the Restoration Drama, Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*, the novels

<sup>1</sup> E. E. Stoll, in *The Modern Language Review*, April 1924.

of Scott, the Brontës, 'Ouida', Miss E. M. Dell, or Mr. P. G. Wodehouse are (quite apart from their artistic merits) of uncertain value as a reflection of the real life of their times. Yet plain common sense justifies the assumption that some sort of reflection of the age, and one which we cannot afford to ignore, is given by such books as—to keep to our own period—the essays of Lamb, Leigh Hunt, and Hazlitt, the novels of Miss Austen and T. L. Peacock, or the poems of Wordsworth and Byron. The truth is that all writing, like all language (except perhaps that of mathematicians), is more or less imaginative—that is, 'image-making' or creative of a 'life within life'; and we must always be on our guard against assuming that any single description of any aspect of the life of an age gives more than a limited, individual glimpse of reality. This is as true of the historian who weaves his facile generalizations long after the events as of the artist building his cloud-castles in the midst of the events; indeed, the historian himself is an imaginative artist, who must submit like us all to the hard law that no single man can tell 'the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth' about anything on earth. Whether we read Shelley or Macaulay, Hardy or Professor Trevelyan, it is a question of the individual vision and of varying degrees of 'imaginative idealization'. *Any* written or printed matter can provide material for the historical picture which we form in our own mind; and probably we get about as much from one kind of 'history' as from the other.

It appears then that the literature of an age can, rightly regarded, be made to yield a valuable picture of the life of that age; and it is upon this assumption that the present attempt has been based. The principle of selection adopted is roughly this: at one end of the scale, all such purely practical documents—official reports, dispatches, daily newspapers, and so on—as are likely to be of little interest to any but trained historians have been ignored; and at the other end, I have used caution in taking extracts from novels or poems which might be



seriously open to the objection that they present an ideal world which is remote from the world of fact. Hence the essays, letters, diaries and humorous verse of the period will be found more fully represented here than the novels or the narrative, philosophical, or lyrical poetry; and it need scarcely be said that this is in no way intended as a comprehensive selection from *all* the great literature of the age.

The middle course thus adopted fits in, on the whole, very well with certain obvious practical necessities. Clearly it would be difficult to find many suitable short extracts in works belonging to the second group mentioned above; and so (for example) though it was something of a struggle to limit the selection from Miss Austen and Peacock to one passage from each, the novels of Scott, though several of them deal with recent or contemporary life, were passed by without much regret. A different reason occasions the inclusion of extracts from only the first two of Dickens's books, the *Sketches by Boz* and *Pickwick*. The downward limit being approximately the accession of Queen Victoria (1837), I have taken little or nothing written after that year except in the form of personal reminiscences of survivors, like Leigh Hunt and De Quincey, from the early years of the century. In *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838-9), and perhaps even in *Pickwick*, we have already the Victorian rather than the Georgian point of view; to the younger generation stage-coaches were becoming humorously romantic—just as with the disappearance of the hansom-cab in the present century.

The upward limit or starting-point is the death of Dr. Johnson (1784), which marks the close of the preceding volume in this series. Nothing, I believe, has been included here which appeared in print before 1784; on the other hand, a few works published later—Gibbon's *Autobiography* and Boswell's *Life of Johnson* are the chief—belong evidently to the earlier period, and have therefore not been used.

In the choice and arrangement of sections I have tried

to give the political, economic, cultural, and social aspects each its due measure of prominence. The French Revolution, with the 'intersecting' ideals of patriotism and liberty to which it gave birth, and the Industrial Revolution, with the astonishing transformation it effected in the daily life of all classes, provide the main background of the period; and the sections on these are therefore placed early. Politics, religion, country and town life, amusements, culture, and home life are then illustrated in natural sequence. Even with the exclusions already referred to, the embarrassments due to superabundance of material have been very serious; a volume two or three times as large could easily have been compiled. I am, moreover, painfully conscious of subjects omitted which leave the picture very incomplete. There is little or nothing about quill pens, domestic pets, or cockfighting (to name a few *desiderata* at random); science, the industries, provincial towns, painting and music are all very imperfectly represented; Royalty *en masse*, and statesmen after Fox and Pitt, have been crowded out; and such sketches of men of letters as Haydon's description<sup>1</sup> of the 'immortal dinner' at which Keats, Lamb, and Wordsworth were guests, or Scott's recollections of Burns, have had to be sacrificed to the claims of briefer or less 'specialized' passages. It seemed best not to attempt to give a little of everything, which would have meant giving nothing solid about anything—reducing most of the extracts to mere snippets.

The short headnotes are designed to give the minimum of information for those extracts not readily intelligible out of their original setting, and (where necessary) to suggest the degree of 'imaginative idealization' which characterizes, for instance, Tony Weller's remarks about the Methodistical shepherd (as compared with Cobbett's attack on the parson at Benenden), or Peacock's account of the election for the 'ancient and honourable' borough of Onevote. Personal details concerning the authors are

<sup>1</sup> *Life, from his Autobiography and Journals*, 1853, vol. i, pp. 384-8.

added only when they seem necessary to the appreciation of particular passages. To economize space, explanatory footnotes have been excluded as far as possible; it is hoped that in some degree the various extracts will be found to explain each other. Wherever the point seemed of importance (as conspicuously with Cobbett) I have been careful to verify and preserve the original spelling and punctuation; but elsewhere I have been content to use good modern reprints like the Oxford Poets and the 'Waller and Glover' Collected Hazlitt.

I wish to thank Professor G. C. Moore Smith for permission to use an extract from the diary of Miss Elizabeth Firth, which he first printed in the *Modern Language Quarterly* (July 1900); and Dr. Eileen Power, one of the Editors of this series, and my friends, Messrs. A. H. Dodd and J. Isaacs, for their help and advice.

R. W. K.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF NORTH WALES

BANGOR

*September 1928*





# ENGLAND FROM WORDSWORTH TO DICKENS

## SECTION ONE

### NATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

#### I. NATIONAL CHARACTER SHOWN IN THE ARTS

*From the introductory remarks in Hazlitt's Lectures on the Literature of the Age of Elizabeth, delivered in 1819 and published in 1820.*

WE are a nation of islanders, and we cannot help it ; nor mend ourselves if we would. We are something in ourselves, nothing when we try to ape others. Music and painting are not our *forte* : for what we have done in that way has been little, and that borrowed from others with great difficulty. But we may boast of our poets and philosophers. That's something. We have had strong heads and sound hearts among us. Thrown on one side of the world, and left to bustle for ourselves, we have fought out many a battle for truth and freedom. That is our natural style ; and it were to be wished we had in no instance departed from it. Our situation has given us a certain cast of thought and character ; and our liberty has enabled us to make the most of it. We are of a stiff clay, not moulded into every fashion, with stubborn joints not easily bent. We are slow to think, and therefore impressions do not work upon us till they act in masses. We are not forward to express our feelings, and therefore they do not come from us till they force their way in

the most impetuous eloquence. Our language is, as it were, to begin anew, and we make use of the most singular and boldest combinations to explain ourselves. Our wit comes from us, 'like birdlime, brains and all.' We pay too little attention to form and method, leave our works in an unfinished state, but still the materials we work in are solid and of nature's mint; we do not deal in counterfeits. We both under and over-do, but we keep an eye to the prominent features, the main chance. We are more for weight than show; care only about what interests ourselves, instead of trying to impose upon others by plausible appearances, and are obstinate and intractable in not conforming to common rules, by which many arrive at their ends with half the real waste of thought and trouble. We neglect all but the principal object, gather our force to make a great blow, bring it down, and relapse into sluggishness and indifference again. *Materiam superabat opus*, cannot be said of us. We may be accused of grossness, but not of flimsiness; of extravagance, but not of affectation; of want of art and refinement, but not of a want of truth and nature. Our literature, in a word, is Gothic and grotesque; unequal and irregular; not cast in a previous mould, nor of one uniform texture, but of great weight in the whole, and of incomparable value in the best parts. It aims at an excess of beauty or power, hits or misses, and is either very good indeed, or absolutely good for nothing. . . . Our understanding (such as it is, and must remain to be good for any thing) is not a thoroughfare for common places, smooth as the palm of one's hand, but full of knotty points and jutting excrescences, rough, uneven, overgrown with brambles; and I like this aspect of the mind (as someone said of the country), where nature keeps a good deal of the soil in her own hands. Perhaps the genius of our poetry has more of Pan than of Apollo; 'but Pan is a god, Apollo is no more!'

II. THE ENGLISH AND FRENCH CHARACTERS  
CONTRASTED

*From a series of Notes from the Pocket-Book of a late Opium Eater, contributed by De Quincey to the London Magazine in 1823.*

'ENGLISH phlegm' is the constant expression of authors, when contrasting the English with the French. Now, the truth is that, beyond that of all other nations, it has a substratum of profound passion: and, if we are to recur to the old doctrine of temperaments, the English character must be classed, not under the *phlegmatic*, but under the *melancholic*, temperament, and the French under the *sanguine*. The character of a nation may be judged of, in this particular, by examining its idiomatic language. The French, in whom the lower forms of passion are constantly bubbling up from the shallow and superficial character of their feelings, have appropriated all the phrases of passion to the service of trivial and ordinary life: and hence they have no language of passion for the service of poetry, or of occasions really demanding it: for it has been already enfeebled by continual association with cases of an unimpassioned order. But a character of deeper passion has a perpetual standard in itself, by which, as by an instinct, it tries all cases, and rejects the language of passion as disproportionate and ludicrous where it is not fully justified. 'Ah Heavens!' or 'Oh my God!' are exclamations, with us, so exclusively reserved for cases of profound interest, that, on hearing a woman even (i.e. a person of the sex most easily excited) utter such words, we look round, expecting to see her child in some situation of danger. But in France, '*Ah Ciel!*' and '*Oh mon Dieu!*' are uttered by every woman if a mouse does but run across the floor. The ignorant and the thoughtless, however, will continue to class the English character under the phlegmatic temperament, whilst the philosopher will perceive that it is the exact polar antithesis to a phlegmatic character.

## III. A GERMAN TRAVELLER ON THE ENGLISH MANNER OF SPEECH

*Karl Philipp Moritz, a Prussian, the friend of Goethe and a writer of some reputation, spent seven weeks in England in 1782. His naive and kindly observations give an interesting and unfamiliar view of the English. They were published in German in 1783 and in English in 1795 as : Travels, Chiefly on Foot, through several Parts of England, in 1782. Described in Letters to a Friend, by Charles P. Moritz. . . . Translated from the German, by a Lady.*

IT was a very fine evening, and as I passed through a village, just before sunset, several people, who met me, accosted me with a phrase, which at first I thought odd, but which I now think civil, if not polite. As if I could possibly want information on such a point, as they passed me, they all very courteously told me *'twas a fine evening, or a pleasant night.*

I have also often met people who, as they passed me, obligingly and kindly asked : *how do you do ?* To which unexpected question from total strangers, I have now learned to answer—*pretty well I thank you, how do you do ?*—This manner of address must needs appear very singular to a foreigner, who is all at once asked by a person, whom he has never seen before, how he does ? . . .

I must, however, here insert a few remarks on the elocution, or manner of speaking of this country, which I had before forgot to write to you.

English eloquence appears to me not to be nearly so capable of so much variety and diffusion as ours is.—Add to this, in their parliamentary speeches ; in sermons, in the pulpit ; in the dialogues on the stage ; nay, even in common conversation, their periods at the end of a sentence are always accompanied, by a certain singular uniform fall of the voice ; which, notwithstanding its monotony, has in it something so peculiar, and so difficult, that I defy any foreigner ever completely to acquire it. . . .

The word *Sir !* in English has a great variety of significations. With the appellation of *Sir*, an Englishman

addresses his *King*, his *friend*, his *foe*, his *servant*, and his *dog*; he makes use of it when asking a question politely; and a Member of Parliament, merely to fill up a vacancy, when he happens to be at a loss. *Sir?* in an inquiring tone of voice, signifies, what is your desire?—*Sir!* in an humble tone—gracious sovereign!—*Sir!* in a surly tone, a box on the ear at your service! to a dog it means a good beating.—And in a speech in Parliament, accompanied by a pause, it signifies I cannot now recollect what it is I wish to say farther.

I do not recollect to have heard any expression repeated oftener than this *never mind it!* A porter, one day, fell down, and cut his head on the pavement: 'O, never mind it!' said an Englishman who happened to be passing by. When I had my trunk fetched from the ship, in a boat, the waterman rowed among the boats, and his boy who stood at the head of his boat, got a sound drubbing, because the others would not let him pass: 'O never mind it!' said the old one, and kept rowing on.

#### IV. THE VICE OF THE ENGLISH—CANT

*From Byron's pamphlet On the Rev. W. L. Bowles's Strictures on the Life and Writings of Pope, written in 1821.*

THE truth is, that in these days the grand '*primum mobile*' of England is *cant*; cant political, cant poetical, cant religious, cant moral; but always *cant*, multiplied through all the varieties of life. It is the fashion, and while it lasts will be too powerful for those who can only exist by taking the tone of the time. I say *cant*, because it is a thing of words, without the smallest influence upon human actions; the English being no wiser, no better, and much poorer, and more divided amongst themselves, as well as far less moral, than they were before the prevalence of this verbal decorum.



## V. THE BRITISH MORAL CODE AND SOME OF ITS VICTIMS

*Lord Byron was divorced from his wife in 1816, and was ostracized by fashionable society as a result. The following remarks occur in Macaulay's article on Moore's Life of Lord Byron which appeared in the Edinburgh Review in 1831.*

WE know no spectacle so ridiculous as the British public in one of its periodical fits of morality. In general, elopements, divorces, and family quarrels, pass with little notice. We read the scandal, talk about it for a day, and forget it. But once in six or seven years our virtue becomes outrageous. We cannot suffer the laws of religion and decency to be violated. We must make a stand against vice. We must teach libertines that the English people appreciate the importance of domestic ties. Accordingly some unfortunate man, in no respect more depraved than hundreds whose offences have been treated with lenity, is singled out as an expiatory sacrifice. If he has children, they are to be taken from him. If he has a profession, he is to be driven from it. He is cut by the higher orders, and hissed by the lower. He is, in truth, a sort of whipping-boy, by whose vicarious agonies all the other transgressors of the same class are, it is supposed, sufficiently chastised. We reflect very complacently on our own severity, and compare with great pride the high standard of morals established in England with the Parisian laxity. At length our anger is satiated. Our victim is ruined and heart-broken. And our virtue goes quietly to sleep for seven years more.

It is clear that those vices which destroy domestic happiness ought to be as much as possible repressed. It is equally clear that they cannot be repressed by penal legislation. It is therefore right and desirable that public opinion should be directed against them. But it should be directed against them uniformly, steadily, and temperately, not by sudden fits and starts. There should be

one weight and one measure. . . . Will posterity believe that, in an age in which men whose gallantries were universally known, and had been legally proved, filled some of the highest offices in the state and in the army, presided at the meetings of religious and benevolent institutions, were the delight of every society, and the favourites of the multitude, a crowd of moralists went to the theatre, in order to pelt a poor actor for disturbing the conjugal felicity of an alderman ? What there was in the circumstances either of the offender or of the sufferer to vindicate the zeal of the audience, we could never conceive. It has never been supposed that the situation of an actor is peculiarly favourable to the rigid virtues, or that an alderman enjoys any special immunity from injuries such as that which on this occasion roused the anger of the public. But such is the justice of mankind. . . .

The obloquy which Byron had to endure was such as might well have shaken a more constant mind. The newspapers were filled with lampoons. The theatres shook with execrations. He was excluded from circles where he had lately been the observed of all observers. All those creeping things that riot in the decay of noble natures hastened to their repast ; and they were right ; they did after their kind. It is not every day that the savage envy of aspiring dunces is gratified by the agonies of such a spirit, and the degradation of such a name.

The unhappy man left his country for ever. The howl of contumely followed him across the sea, up the Rhine, over the Alps ; it gradually waxed fainter ; it died away ; those who had raised it began to ask each other, what, after all, was the matter about which they had been so clamorous, and wished to invite back the criminal whom they had just chased from them. His poetry became more popular than it had ever been ; and his complaints were read with tears by thousands and tens of thousands who had never seen his face.

## VI. LOVE OF COUNTRY

*These often-quoted lines are from Book II of Cowper's Task (1785).—William Pitt the Elder, first Earl of Chatham, and General James Wolfe were perhaps the greatest men of the generation before our survey begins. Chatham, who had opposed the Government's disastrous policy in dealing with the American colonies, died in 1778 during the War of Independence. Wolfe, the conqueror of Canada, had been killed leading the famous attack on the French at Quebec in 1759.*

ENGLAND, with all thy faults, I love thee still  
 My country! and while yet a nook is left  
 Where English minds and manners may be found,  
 Shall be constrain'd to love thee. Though thy clime  
 Be fickle, and thy year, most part, deform'd  
 With dripping rains, or wither'd by a frost,  
 I would not yet exchange thy sullen skies  
 And fields without a flower, for warmer France  
 With all her vines; nor for Ausonia's groves  
 Of golden fruitage and her myrtle bowers. 10  
 To shake thy senate, and from heights sublime  
 Of patriot eloquence to flash down fire  
 Upon thy foes, was never meant my task;  
 But I can feel thy fortunes, and partake  
 Thy joys and sorrows with as true a heart  
 As any thund'rer there. And I can feel  
 Thy follies too, and with a just disdain  
 Frown at effeminate, whose very looks  
 Reflect dishonor on the land I love. . . .

Time was when it was praise and boast enough 20  
 In ev'ry clime, and travel where we might,  
 That we were born her children. Praise enough  
 To fill th' ambition of a private man,  
 That Chatham's language was his mother tongue,  
 And Wolfe's great name compatriot with his own.  
 Farewell those honors, and farewell with them  
 The hope of such hereafter. They have fall'n  
 Each in his field of glory: One in arms,  
 And one in council. Wolfe upon the lap  
 Of smiling victory that moment won, 30

And Chatham, heart-sick of his country's shame.  
 They made us many soldiers. Chatham still  
 Consulting England's happiness at home,  
 Secured it by an unforgiving frown  
 If any wrong'd her. Wolfe, where'er he fought,  
 Put so much of his heart into his act,  
 That his example had a magnet's force,  
 And all were swift to follow whom all loved.  
 Those suns are set. Oh rise some other such !  
 Or all that we have left, is empty talk  
 Of old achievements, and despair of new.

40

## VII. THE SCOTCH AND THE IRISH

*Impressions gained on a walking-tour through south-western Scotland, during which, before going on to Ayrshire, Keats crossed to Ireland from Port Patrick and spent a few days in Ulster. The poet is writing to his younger brother Tom.*

*Donaghadee, July 6, 1818.* I am writing now in little Ireland. The dialects on the neighbouring shores of Scotland and Ireland are much the same, yet I can perceive a great difference in the nations, from the chambermaid at this *nate toone* kept by Mr. Kelly. She is fair, kind, and ready to laugh, because she is out of the horrible dominion of the Scotch Kirk. A Scotch girl stands in terrible awe of the Elders—poor little Susannahs, they will scarcely laugh, and their Kirk is greatly to be damned. . . .

On our walk in Ireland, we had too much opportunity to see the worse than nakedness, the rags, the dirt and misery of the poor common Irish. A Scotch cottage, though in that sometimes the smoke has no exit but at the door, is a palace to an Irish one. . . . On our return from Belfast we met a sedan—the Duchess of Dunghill. It is no laughing matter though. Imagine the worst dog-kennel you ever saw, placed upon two poles from a mouldy fencing. In such a wretched thing sat a squalid old woman, squat like an ape half-starved, from a scarcity of biscuit in its passage from Madagascar to the Cape,

with a pipe in her mouth, and looking out with a round-eyed, skinny-lidded inanity; with a sort of horizontal idiotic movement of her head—squat and lean she sat, and puffed out the smoke, while two ragged tattered girls carried her along. What a thing would be a history of her life and sensations; I shall endeavour when I have thought a little more, to give you my idea of the difference between the Scotch and Irish. . . .

*Kirkoswald, Ayrshire, July 11, 1818.* I will speak as far as I can judge on the Irish and Scotch—I know nothing of the higher Classes—yet I have a persuasion that there the Irish are victorious. As to the ‘*Profanum vulgus*’ I must incline to the Scotch. They never laugh—but they are always comparatively neat and clean. Their constitutions are not so remote and puzzling as the Irish. The Scotchman will never give a decision on any point—he will never commit himself in a sentence which may be referred to as a meridian in his notion of things—so that you do not know him—and yet you may come in nigher neighbourhood to him than to the Irishman who commits himself in so many places that it dazes your head. A Scotchman’s motive is more easily discovered than an Irishman’s. A Scotchman will go wisely about to deceive you, an Irishman cunningly. An Irishman would bluster out of any discovery to his disadvantage. A Scotchman would retire perhaps without much desire for revenge. An Irishman likes to be thought a gallous fellow. A Scotchman is contented with himself. It seems to me, they are both sensible of the Character they hold in England and act accordingly to Englishmen. Thus the Scotchman will become over-grave and over-decent and the Irishman over-impetuous. I like a Scotchman best because he is less of a bore—I like the Irishman best because he ought to be more comfortable.—The Scotchman has made up his Mind with himself in a sort of snail shell wisdom. The Irishman is full of strongheaded instinct.



## SECTION TWO

# THE FRENCH REVOLUTION AND THE WARS

## I. THE BASTILLE: FRENCH TYRANNY AND ENGLISH FREEDOM

*A famous 'prophecy' (in Cowper's Task, Book V) of the destruction of the Bastille, the prison in Paris which had become the 'symbol of absolutism'. Four years after these lines were printed, its fall, on July 14, 1789, marked the outbreak of the French Revolution.*

SHAME to manhood, and opprobrious more  
To France, than all her losses and defeats  
Old or of later date, by sea or land,  
Her house of bondage worse than that of old  
Which God avenged on Pharaoh—the Bastile.  
Ye horrid tow'rs, th' abode of broken hearts,  
Ye dungeons and ye cages of despair,  
That monarchs have supplied from age to age  
With music such as suits their sov'reign ears,  
The sighs and groans of miserable men! 10  
There's not an English heart that would not leap  
To hear that ye were fall'n at last, to know  
That ev'n our enemies, so oft employed  
In forging chains for us, themselves were free.  
For he that values liberty, confines  
His zeal for her predominance within  
No narrow bounds; her cause engages him  
Wherever pleaded. 'Tis the cause of man. . . .

'Tis liberty alone that gives the flow'r  
Of fleeting life its lustre and perfume, 20  
And we are weeds without it. All constraint,

Except what wisdom lays on evil men,  
 Is evil ; hurts the faculties, impedes  
 Their progress in the road of science ; blinds  
 The eye sight of discov'ry, and begets  
 In those that suffer it, a sordid mind  
 Bestial, a meagre intellect, unfit  
 To be the tenant of man's noble form.  
 Thee therefore still, blame-worthy as thou art,  
 With all thy loss of empire, and though squeezed 30  
 By public exigence 'till annual food  
 Fails for the craving hunger of the state,  
 Thee I account still happy, and the chief  
 Among the nations, seeing thou art free !  
 My native nook of earth !

## II. THE FRENCH REVOLUTION: AN ENGLISH REFORMER'S WELCOME

*The closing sentences of a sermon 'On the Love of our Country', preached on November 4, 1789, by Dr. Richard Price, a Dissenting minister of great reputation and influence. It acted as a 'red rag' to Burke, who several times mentions it, with strong disapproval, in his Reflections on the Revolution in France.*

WHAT an eventful period is this ! I am thankful that I have lived to it ; and I could almost say, *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.* I have lived to see a diffusion of knowledge, which has undermined superstition and error—I have lived to see the rights of men better understood than ever ; and nations panting for liberty, who seemed to have lost the idea of it.—I have lived to see THIRTY MILLIONS of people, indignant and resolute, spurning at slavery, and demanding liberty with an irresistible voice ; their king led in triumph, and an arbitrary monarch surrendering himself to his subjects.—After sharing in the benefits of one Revolution, I have been spared to be a witness to two other Revolutions, both glorious.—And now, methinks, I see the ardor for liberty catching and spreading ; a general amend-

ment beginning in human affairs ; the dominion of kings changed for the dominion of laws, and the dominion of priests giving way to the dominion of reason and conscience.

Be encouraged, all ye friends of freedom, and writers in its defence ! The times are auspicious. Your labours have not been in vain. Behold kingdoms, admonished by you, starting from sleep, breaking their fetters, and claiming justice from their oppressors ! Behold, the light you have struck out, after setting AMERICA free, reflected to FRANCE, and there kindled into a blaze that lays despotism in ashes, and warms and illuminates EUROPE !

Tremble all ye oppressors of the world ! Take warning all ye supporters of slavish governments, and slavish hierarchies ! Call no more (absurdly and wickedly) REFORMATION, innovation. You cannot now hold the world in darkness. Struggle no longer against increasing light and liberality. Restore to mankind their rights ; and consent to the correction of abuses, before they and you are destroyed together.

### III. A YOUNG MAN'S JOY AT THE 'DAWN OF LIBERTY'

*In 1789 Wordsworth, at nineteen, was as fiery a democrat as Tom Paine or Shelley ; but by 1804, when these lines (from The Prelude, Book XI) were written, he had become a convinced conservative.*

O PLEASANT exercise of hope and joy !  
 For mighty were the auxiliars which then stood  
 Upon our side, us who were strong in love !  
 Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,  
 But to be young was very Heaven ! O times,  
 In which the meagre, stale, forbidding ways  
 Of custom, law, and statute, took at once  
 The attraction of a country in romance !  
 When Reason seemed the most to assert her rights  
 When most intent on making of herself

A prime enchantress—to assist the work,  
Which then was going forward in her name ! . . .

Why should I not confess that Earth was then  
To me, what an inheritance, new-fallen,  
Seems, when the first time visited, to one  
Who thither comes to find in it his home ?  
He walks about and looks upon the spot  
With cordial transport, moulds it and remoulds,  
And is half pleased with things that are amiss,  
'Twill be such joy to see them disappear.

20

#### IV. A HOSTILE VIEW OF THE REVOLUTION

*Burke's famous Reflections on the Revolution in France appeared in November 1790, during the earlier stages of the Revolution. He is here maintaining that only a small minority of Englishmen approve the unconstitutional action of the National Assembly.*

I SPEAK from observation, not from authority ; but I speak from the experience I have had in a pretty extensive and mixed communication with the inhabitants of this kingdom, of all descriptions and ranks, and after a course of attentive observation, began early in life, and continued for near forty years. I have often been astonished, considering that we are divided from you but by a slender dyke of about twenty-four miles, and that the mutual intercourse between the two countries has lately been very great, to find how little you seem to know of us. I suspect that this is owing to your forming a judgment of this nation from certain publications, which do very erroneously, if they do at all, represent the opinions and dispositions generally prevalent in England. The vanity, restlessness, petulance, and spirit of intrigue of several petty cabals, who attempt to hide their total want of consequence in bustle and noise, and puffing, and mutual quotation of each other, makes you imagine that our contemptuous neglect of their abilities is a mark of general acquiescence in their opinions. No such thing, I assure you. Because half a dozen grasshoppers under a fern

make the field ring with their importunate chink, whilst thousands of great cattle, reposed beneath the shadow of the British oak, chew the cud and are silent, pray do not imagine, that those who make the noise are the only inhabitants of the field ; that, of course, they are many in number ; or that, after all, they are other than the little shrivelled, meagre, hopping, though loud and troublesome insects of the hour. . . .

Thanks to our sullen resistance to innovation, thanks to the cold sluggishness of our national character, we still bear the stamp of our forefathers. We have not, as I conceive, lost the generosity and dignity of thinking of the fourteenth century ; nor as yet have we subtilized ourselves into savages. We are not the converts of Rousseau ; we are not the disciples of Voltaire ; Helvetius has made no progress amongst us. Atheists are not our preachers ; madmen are not our lawgivers. We know that *we* have made no discoveries, and we think that no discoveries are to be made, in morality ; nor many in the great principles of government, nor in the ideas of liberty, which were understood long before we were born, altogether as well as they will be after the grave has heaped its mould upon our presumption, and the silent tomb shall have imposed its law on our pert loquacity. In England we have not yet been completely embowelled of our natural entrails ; we still feel within us, and we cherish and cultivate, those inbred sentiments which are the faithful guardians, the active monitors of our duty, the true supporters of all liberal and manly morals. We have not been drawn and trussed, in order that we may be filled, like stuffed birds in a museum, with chaff and rags, and paltry blurred shreds of paper about the rights of man. We preserve the whole of our feelings still native and entire, unsophisticated by pedantry and infidelity. We have real hearts of flesh and blood beating in our bosoms. We fear God ; we look up with awe to kings ; with affection to parliaments ; with duty to magistrates ; with reverence to priests ; and with respect to nobility. Why ?



because when such ideas are brought before our minds, it is *natural* to be so affected ; because all other feelings are false and spurious, and tend to corrupt our minds, to vitiate our primary morals, to render us unfit for rational liberty.

## V. FRANCE AND ENGLAND, 1792-3 : A CONTRAST

*Horace Walpole, the letter-writer, who was now an old man, held opinions not unlike those of Cowper. In 1789 he had welcomed the fall of the Bastille ; but he accepted the war with the Revolutionary Government, when it began in February 1793, as just and necessary. The chief allusions here are to the slaughter of the Swiss Guard at the Tuileries (August 10, 1792), the ' September Massacres ' in Paris, the beheading of Louis XVI (Jan. 21, 1793), and the imprisonment of Marie-Antoinette in the Temple : she was executed on October 16, 1793.*

February 9, 1793. [To Miss Hannah More.] You have been apt to tell me that my letters diverted you. How then could I write, when it was impossible but to attrist you ! when I could speak of nothing but unparalleled horrors ! and but awaken your sensibility, if it slumbered for a moment ! What mind could forget the 10th of August, and the 2d of September ; and that the black and bloody year 1792 has plunged its murderous dagger still deeper, and already made 1793 still more detestably memorable ! though its victim has at last been rewarded for four years of torture by forcing from him every kind of proof of the most perfect character that ever sat on a throne. Were these, alas ! themes for letters ? Nay, am I not sure that *you* have been still more shocked by a crime that passes even the guilt of shedding the blood of poor Louis, to hear of atheism avowed, and the avowal tolerated by monsters calling themselves a National Assembly ! But I have no words that can reach the criminality of such *inferno-human* beings, but must compose a term that aims at conveying my idea of them. For the future it will be sufficient to call them *the French* ; I hope no other nation will ever deserve to be confounded with them ! . . .

Wednesday night, late, July 17, 1793. [To the Hon. H. S.

Conway.] It is much cooler to-day, yet still delicious; for be it known to you that I have enjoyed weather worthy of Africa, and yet without swallowing mouthfuls of muskitos, nor expecting to hear hyænas howl in the village, nor to find scorpions in my bed. Indeed, all the way I came home, I could but gaze at the felicity of my countrymen. The road was one string of stage-coaches loaded within and without with noisy jolly folks, and chaises and gigs that had been pleasuring in clouds of dust; every door and every window of every house was open, lights in every shop, every door with women sitting in the street, every inn crowded with jaded horses, and every ale-house full of drunken toppers; for you know the English always announce their sense of heat or cold by drinking. Well! it was impossible not to enjoy such a scene of happiness and affluence in every village, and amongst the lowest of the people; and who are told by villanous scribblers, that they are oppressed and miserable. New streets, new towns, are rising every day and everywhere; the earth is covered with gardens and crops of grain.

How bitter to turn from this Elysium to the Temple at Paris! The fiends there have now torn her son from the Queen! Can one believe that they are human beings, who 'midst all their confusions sit coolly meditating new tortures, new anguish for that poor, helpless, miserable woman, after four years of unexampled sufferings? Oh! if such crimes are not made a dreadful lesson, this world might become a theatre of cannibals!

## VI. CHRIST AND THE WAR WITH FRANCE

*In a note to this poem, Religious Musings . . . written on the Christmas Eve of 1794, Coleridge quotes a statement in Parliament (Jan. 21, 1794) by the Duke of Portland, that he 'considered the war to be merely grounded on one principle—the preservation of the Christian Religion'; and another, by Lord Abingdon (May 30, 1794): 'The best road to Peace, my Lords, is War! and War carried on in the same manner in which we are taught to worship our Creator, namely,*

*with all our souls, and with all our minds, and with all our hearts, and with all our strength.'*

## EVEN NOW

(Black hell laughs horrible—to hear the scoff !)  
 Thee to defend, meek Galilæan ! Thee  
 And thy mild laws of Love unutterable,  
 Mistrust and enmity have burst the bands  
 Of social peace : and listening Treachery lurks  
 With *pious* fraud to snare a brother's life ;  
 And childless widows o'er the groaning land  
 Wail numberless ; and orphans weep for bread !  
 Thee to defend, dear Saviour of Mankind ! 10  
 Thee, Lamb of God ! Thee, blameless Prince of Peace !  
 From all sides rush the thirsty brood of War ! . . .  
 Nor least in savagery of holy zeal,  
 Apt for the yoke, the race degenerate,  
 Whom Britain erst had blushed to call her sons !  
 Thee to defend the Moloch Priest prefers  
 The prayer of hate, and bellows to the herd,  
 That Deity, Accomplice Deity  
 In the fierce jealousy of wakened wrath  
 Will go forth with our armies and our fleets 20  
 To scatter the red ruin on their foes !  
 O blasphemy !

VII. BONAPARTE AS FIRST CONSUL OF THE  
FRENCH REPUBLIC

*In the spring of 1802, during the short-lived Peace of Amiens, Bonaparte was elected Consul for life. A vivid impression of the 'First Consul' at this period is furnished by the novelist Fanny Burney's account (in her Diary) of a military review at Paris in May 1802.*

THE room was full, but not crowded, with officers of rank in sumptuous rather than rich uniforms, and exhibiting a martial air that became their attire, which, however, generally speaking, was too gorgeous to be noble.

Our window was that next to the consular apartment, in which Bonaparte was holding a levee, and it was close

to the steps ascending to it ; by which means we saw all the forms of the various exits and entrances, and had opportunity to examine every dress and every countenance that passed and repassed. This was highly amusing, I might say historic, where the past history and the present office were known. . . .

While this variety of attire, of carriage, and of physiognomy amused us in facing the passage prepared for the First Consul, we were occupied, whenever we turned round, by seeing from the window the garden of the Tuileries filling with troops. . . .

The last object for whom the way was cleared was the Second Consul, Cambacérès, who advanced with a stately and solemn pace, slow, regular, and consequential ; dressed richly in scarlet and gold, and never looking to the right or left, but wearing a mien of fixed gravity and importance. He had several persons in his suite, who, I think, but am not sure, were ministers of state.

At length the two human hedges were finally formed, the door of the audience chamber was thrown wide open with a commanding crash, and a vivacious officer—sentinel—or I know not what, nimbly descended the three steps into our apartment, and placing himself at the side of the door, with one hand spread as high as possible above his head, and the other extended horizontally, called out in a loud and authoritative voice, ‘ Le Premier Consul ! ’

You will easily believe nothing more was necessary to obtain attention ; not a soul either spoke or stirred as he and his suite passed along, which was so quickly that, had I not been placed so near the door, and had not all about me facilitated my standing foremost, and being least crowd-obstructed, I could hardly have seen him. As it was, I had a view so near, though so brief, of his face, as to be very much struck by it. It is of a deeply impressive cast, pale even to sallowness, while not only in the eye but in every feature—care, thought, melancholy, and meditation are strongly marked, with so much of character, nay, genius, and so penetrating a seriousness, or

rather sadness, as powerfully to sink into an observer's mind.

Yet, though the busts and medallions I have seen are, in general, such good resemblances that I think I should have known him untold, he has by no means the look to be expected from Bonaparte, but rather that of a profoundly studious and contemplative man, who 'o'er books consumes' not only the 'midnight oil' but his own daily strength, 'and wastes the puny body to decay' by abstruse speculation and theoretic plans, or rather visions, ingenious but not practicable. But the look of the commander who heads his own army, who fights his own battles, who conquers every difficulty by personal exertion, who executes all he plans, who performs even all he suggests; whose ambition is of the most enterprising, and whose bravery is of the most daring cast:—this, which is the look to be expected from his situation, and the exploits which have led to it, the spectator watches for in vain. The plainness, also, of his dress, so conspicuously contrasted by the finery of all around him, conspires forcibly with his countenance, so 'sicklied o'er with the pale hue of thought,' to give him far more the air of a student than a warrior.

## VIII. THE PERIL OF INVASION

*War with France broke out afresh in May 1803, and the danger of an invasion of England now became more acute. During 1803 over ten thousand volunteers were enrolled in Kent alone. The first extract (from Lockhart's Life) gives a glimpse of Sir Walter Scott in martial mood; and Wordsworth, the author of the spirited sonnet, was also a volunteer, at his home in the Lake District.*

### I

DURING the summer of 1803 [Scott's] chief literary labour was still on the 'Tristrem'; and I shall presently give some further extracts from his letters to Ellis, which will amply illustrate the spirit in which he continued his researches about the Seer of Ercildoune, and the inter-ruptions which these owed to the prevalent alarm of



French invasion. Both as Quartermaster of the Edinburgh Light-horse, and as Sheriff of The [Ettrick] Forest, he had a full share of responsibility in the warlike arrangements to which the authorities of Scotland had at length been roused. . . .

The following extract is from a letter written at Musselburgh, during this summer or autumn :

' Miss Seward's acceptable favour reaches me in a place, and at a time, of great bustle, as the corps of voluntary cavalry to which I belong is quartered for a short time in this village, for the sake of drilling and discipline. . . . We are here assuming a very military appearance. Three regiments of militia, with a formidable park of artillery, are encamped just by us. The Edinburgh troop, to which I have the honour to be quartermaster, consists entirely of young gentlemen of family, and is, of course, admirably well mounted and armed. There are other four troops in the regiment, consisting of yeomanry, whose iron faces and muscular forms announce the hardness of the climate against which they wrestle, and the powers which nature has given them to contend with and subdue it. These corps have been easily raised in Scotland, the farmers being in general a high-spirited race of men, fond of active exercises, and patient of hardship and fatigue. For myself, I must own that to one who has, like myself, *la tête un peu exaltée*, the pomp and circumstance of war gives, for a time, a very poignant and pleasing sensation. The imposing appearance of cavalry, in particular, and the rush which marks their onset, appear to me to partake highly of the sublime.'

## II

### *To the Men of Kent : October, 1803*

VANGUARD of Liberty, ye men of Kent,  
 Ye children of a Soil that doth advance  
 Her haughty brow against the coast of France,  
 Now is the time to prove your hardiment !



To France be words of invitation sent !

They from their fields can see the countenance  
Of your fierce war, may ken the glittering lance,  
And hear you shouting forth your brave intent.

Left single, in bold parley, ye, of yore,

Did from the Norman win a gallant wreath ; 10  
Confirmed the charters that were yours before ;—

No parleying now. In Britain is one breath ;  
We all are with you now from shore to shore ;—  
Ye men of Kent, 'tis victory or death !

## IX. THE DEATH OF NELSON

*From Southey's stirring account, in his Life of Nelson (1813), of the Battle of Trafalgar, October 21, 1805.*

IT had been part of Nelson's prayer, that the British fleet might be distinguished by humanity in the victory which he expected. Setting an example himself, he twice gave orders to cease firing upon the *Redoubtable*, supposing that she had struck, because her great guns were silent ; for, as she carried no flag, there was no means of instantly ascertaining the fact. From this ship, which he had thus twice spared, he received his death. A ball fired from her mizen-top, which, in the then situation of the two vessels, was no more than fifteen yards from that part of the deck where he was standing, struck the epaulette on his left shoulder, about a quarter after one, just in the heat of the action. He fell upon his face, on the spot which was covered with his poor secretary's blood. Hardy, who was a few steps from him, turning round, saw three men raising him up. ' They have done for me at last, Hardy,' said he. ' I hope not ! ' cried Hardy. ' Yes,' he replied ; ' my back bone is shot through.' Yet even now, not for a moment losing his presence of mind, he observed, as they were carrying him down the ladder, that the tiller ropes, which had been shot away, were not yet replaced, and ordered that new ones should be rove immediately :—then, that he might not be seen by the crew, he took out his hand-

kerchief, and covered his face and his stars. Had he but concealed these badges of honour from the enemy, England, perhaps, would not have had cause to receive with sorrow the news of the battle of Trafalgar.

The cockpit was crowded with wounded and dying men ; over whose bodies he was with some difficulty conveyed, and laid upon a pallet in the midshipmen's berth. It was soon perceived, upon examination, that the wound was mortal. This, however, was concealed from all, except Captain Hardy, the chaplain, and the medical attendants. He himself being certain, from the sensation in his back, and the gush of blood which he felt momentarily within his breast, that no human care could avail him, insisted that the surgeon should leave him, and attend to those to whom he might be useful : ' For,' said he, ' you can do nothing for me.' All that could be done was to fan him with paper, and frequently to give him lemonade, to alleviate his intense thirst. He was in great pain, and expressed much anxiety for the event of the action, which now began to declare itself. As often as a ship struck, the crew of the *Victory* hurrahed ; and at every hurrah a visible expression of joy gleamed in the eyes, and marked the countenance of the dying hero. But he became impatient to see Captain Hardy ; and as that officer, though often sent for, could not leave the deck, Nelson feared that some fatal cause prevented him, and repeatedly cried : ' Will no one bring Hardy to me ? He must be killed ! He is surely dead ! '—An hour and ten minutes elapsed, from the time when Nelson received his wound, before Hardy could come to him. They shook hands in silence ; Hardy in vain struggling to suppress the feelings of that most painful, and yet sublimest moment. ' Well, Hardy,' said Nelson, ' how goes the day with us ? '—' Very well,' replied Hardy : ' ten ships have struck, but five of their van have tacked, and show an intention of bearing down upon the *Victory*. I have called two or three of our fresh ships round, and have no doubt of giving them a drubbing.'—' I hope,' said Nelson, ' none of our ships have struck ? '

Hardy answered, 'There was no fear of that.' Then, and not till then, Nelson spoke of himself. 'I am a dead man, Hardy,' said he: 'I am going fast: it will be all over with me soon. Come nearer to me. Let my dear Lady Hamilton have my hair, and all other things belonging to me.' Hardy observed, that he hoped Mr. Beatty could yet hold out some prospect of life. 'Oh no!' he replied; 'it is impossible. My back is shot through. Beatty will tell you so.' Captain Hardy then, once more, shook hands with him; and, with a heart almost bursting, hastened upon deck. . . .

Captain Hardy, some fifteen minutes after he had left the cockpit, returned; and again taking the hand of his dying friend and commander, congratulated him on having gained a complete victory. How many of the enemy were taken he did not know, as it was impossible to perceive them distinctly—but fourteen or fifteen at least. 'That's well,' cried Nelson; 'but I bargained for twenty.' And then, in a stronger voice, he said, 'Anchor, Hardy; anchor.' Hardy, upon this, hinted that Admiral Collingwood would take upon himself the direction of affairs. 'Not while I live, Hardy!' said the dying Nelson, ineffectually endeavouring to raise himself from the bed: 'do you anchor.' His previous order for preparing to anchor had shown how clearly he foresaw the necessity of this. Presently, calling Hardy back, he said to him, in a low voice, 'Don't throw me overboard': and he desired that he might be buried by his parents, unless it should please the king to order otherwise. Then, reverting to private feelings: 'Take care of my dear Lady Hamilton, Hardy: take care of poor Lady Hamilton. Kiss me, Hardy,' said he. Hardy knelt down, and kissed his cheek: and Nelson said, 'Now I am satisfied. Thank God, I have done my duty.' Hardy stood over him in silence for a moment or two; then knelt again, and kissed his forehead. 'Who is that?' said Nelson; and being informed, he replied, 'God bless you, Hardy.' And Hardy then left him—for ever.

Nelson now desired to be turned upon his right side, and said: 'I wish I had not left the deck; for I shall soon be gone.' Death was, indeed, rapidly approaching. He said to the chaplain: 'Doctor, I have *not* been a *great* sinner': and, after a short pause, 'Remember that I leave Lady Hamilton, and my daughter Horatia, as a legacy to my country.' His articulation now became difficult; but he was distinctly heard to say, 'Thank God, I have done my duty!' These words he had repeatedly pronounced; and they were the last words which he uttered. He expired at thirty minutes after four—three hours and a quarter after he had received his wound. . . .

The death of Nelson was felt in England as something more than a public calamity: men started at the intelligence, and turned pale, as if they had heard of the loss of a dear friend. An object of our admiration and affection, of our pride and of our hopes, was suddenly taken from us; and it seemed as if we had never, till then, known how deeply we loved and revered him. What the country had lost in its great naval hero—the greatest of our own, and of all former times, was scarcely taken into the account of grief. So perfectly, indeed, had he performed his part, that the maritime war, after the battle of Trafalgar, was considered at an end: the fleets of the enemy were not merely defeated, but destroyed: new navies must be built, and a new race of seamen reared for them, before the possibility of their invading our shores could again be contemplated. It was not, therefore, from any selfish reflection upon the magnitude of our loss that we mourned for him: the general sorrow was of a higher character. The people of England grieved that funeral ceremonies, public monuments and posthumous rewards, were all which they could now bestow upon him, whom the king, the legislature, and the nation, would alike have delighted to honour; whom every tongue would have blessed; whose presence in every village through which he might have passed would have wakened the church bells, have given schoolboys a holiday, have drawn chil-

dren from their sports to gaze upon him, and 'old men from the chimney corner,' to look upon Nelson ere they died. The victory of Trafalgar was celebrated, indeed, with the usual forms of rejoicing, but they were without joy; for such already was the glory of the British navy, through Nelson's surpassing genius, that it scarcely seemed to receive any addition from the most signal victory that ever was achieved upon the seas; and the destruction of this mighty fleet, by which all the maritime schemes of France were totally frustrated, hardly appeared to add to our security or strength; for, while Nelson was living to watch the combined squadrons of the enemy, we felt ourselves as secure as now, when they were no longer in existence.

## X. THE DARKEST HOUR

*November 1806; After Jena.*

*In spite of Trafalgar, 1806 was the year during which the fate of England seemed most uncertain. Napoleon, Emperor of the French since 1804, was becoming supreme on the continent: Pitt died in January 1806, Fox followed him in September; and their successors were smaller men.—The 'mighty Empire', alluded to in this sonnet by Wordsworth, was Prussia, crushingly defeated by the French at Auerstadt and at Jena on October 14, 1806.*

ANOTHER year!—Another deadly blow!  
 Another mighty Empire overthrown!  
 And We are left, or shall be left, alone;  
 The last that dare to struggle with the Foe.  
 'Tis well! from this day forward we shall know  
 That in ourselves our safety must be sought;  
 That by our own right hands it must be wrought;  
 That we must stand unpropped, or be laid low.  
 O dastard whom such foretaste doth not cheer!  
 We shall exult, if they who rule the land 10  
 Be men who hold its many blessings dear,  
 Wise, upright, valiant; not a servile band,  
 Who are to judge of danger which they fear,  
 And honour which they do not understand.



## XI. REMINISCENCES OF A PENINSULAR WAR VETERAN

*Recorded by the painter Haydon in his Autobiography.—In July 1809 Wellington won the hard-fought Battle of Talavera; but he gained little from it, owing to the poor support given him by the Spanish under Cuesta. The frequent misconduct of the English troops in Spain (a country where there were many temptations to disorder) is attested by the Duke's dispatches; e.g., (May 1809): 'They have plundered the country most terribly'; (July 1813): 'We have in the service the scum of the earth as common soldiers,' etc.*

WHILE I was at Hastings [in 1814] a Martello Tower at Bo-peep was full of wounded soldiers from Spain. Returning to town outside the coach, I had one of the 95th. [Regiment], a desperate rifleman, by my side. He had yards of flannel wrapped round him. He was spare, pale, haggard, keen, and talked all the way. He had been wounded at Talavera, when Cuesta ran away, and the Duke was obliged to cross the Tagus, and the French entered. This fellow, and a corporal of the guards, hobbled out of the town, both wounded, bloody and lame. A man and two mules passed; they begged for help, but he disregarded them. 'I say, rifleman, is your rifle loaded?' said the guardsman. 'I have never looked since the battle.' 'Touch up that fellow, if it will go off.' 'Good God!' said a horror-stricken cockney on the other side; 'what did you do?' 'Do! why, clapped up my rifle, to be sure; she never missed; down came my gentleman! We were too lame to mount, so we led the mules till we came to a ditch, and then slipped off the dyke on their backs, and, what's more, found three hundred dollars in the saddlebags!' 'My God,' said the cockney, 'you wretch!' 'That may be,' said the 95th. man; 'but why did he not help us, the rascal, wounded for his d——d country? We got gloriously safe to Elvas, and many good drinks we had of the three hundred dollars.'

This fellow was a complete rascal. He told stories that made one's flesh creep, and boasted of villanies as evidence of talent in a way that was dreadful. He had brought off,



he said, fifty-six men, prisoners, safe to Lisbon, and then, by the Duke's order, got a dollar a man. They had undermined a wall, and the exploit, I remembered, was in the papers at the time. He was a keen dog, who evidently advised his officer if he knew better, but shrunk from command. He gave us a description of the adventures of the advance; most entertaining. He said one Irish regiment took off all their buttons, and passed them for shillings. They had changed clothes so often with the dead, enemies and English, that, on meeting the Duke once, he did not know what regiment they were.

## XII. THE EVE OF WATERLOO

*Famous stanzas from Canto III of Byron's Childe Harold's Pilgrimage (1816).—The Duchess of Richmond's ball at Brussels was actually held on Thursday, June 15, 1815, on the evening before the engagements at Quatre Bras and Ligny; Waterloo itself was fought on Sunday, June 18.*

THERE was a sound of revelry by night,  
And Belgium's Capital had gathered then  
Her Beauty and her Chivalry—and bright  
The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men;  
A thousand hearts beat happily; and when  
Music arose with its voluptuous swell,  
Soft eyes looked love to eyes which spake again,  
And all went merry as a marriage bell;  
But hush! hark! a deep sound strikes like a rising knell!

Did ye not hear it?—No—'twas but the Wind,      10  
Or the car rattling o'er the stony street;  
On with the dance! let joy be unconfined;  
No sleep till morn, when Youth and Pleasure meet  
To chase the glowing Hours with flying feet—  
But hark!—that heavy sound breaks in once more,  
As if the clouds its echo would repeat;  
And nearer—clearer—deadlier than before!  
Arm! Arm! it is—it is—the cannon's opening roar! . . .

Ah ! then and there was hurrying to and fro—  
 And gathering tears, and tremblings of distress, 20  
 And cheeks all pale, which but an hour ago  
 Blushed at the praise of their own loveliness—  
 And there were sudden partings, such as press  
 The life from out young hearts, and choking sighs  
 Which ne'er might be repeated ; who could guess  
 If ever more should meet those mutual eyes,  
 Since upon night so sweet such awful morn could rise !

And there was mounting in hot haste—the steed,  
 The mustering squadron, and the clattering car,  
 Went pouring forward with impetuous speed, 30  
 And swiftly forming in the ranks of war—  
 And the deep thunder peal on peal afar ;  
 And near, the beat of the alarming drum  
 Roused up the soldier ere the Morning Star ;  
 While thronged the citizens with terror dumb,  
 Or whispering, with white lips—‘ The foe ! They come !  
 they come ! ’

And wild and high the ‘ Cameron’s Gathering ’ rose !  
 The war-note of Lochiel, which Albyn’s hills  
 Have heard, and heard, too, have her Saxon foes :—  
 How in the noon of night, that pibroch thrills, 40  
 Savage and shrill ! But with the breath which fills  
 Their mountain-pipe, so fill the mountaineers  
 With the fierce native daring which instils  
 The stirring memory of a thousand years,  
 And Evan’s—Donald’s fame rings in each clansman’s ears !

And Ardennes waves above them her green leaves,  
 Dewy with Nature’s tear-drops, as they pass—  
 Grieving, if aught inanimate e’er grieves,  
 Over the unreturning brave,—alas !  
 Ere evening to be trodden like the grass 50  
 Which now beneath them, but above shall grow  
 In its next verdure, when this fiery mass  
 Of living Valour, rolling on the foe  
 And burning with high Hope, shall moulder cold and low.

Last noon beheld them full of lusty life ; —  
 Last eve in Beauty's circle proudly gay ;  
 The Midnight brought the signal-sound of strife,  
 The Morn the marshalling in arms,—the Day  
 Battle's magnificently-stern array !  
 The thunder-clouds close o'er it, which when rent      60  
 The earth is covered thick with other clay  
 Which her own clay shall cover, heaped and pent,  
 Rider and horse,—friend,—foe,—in one red burial blent !

### XIII. THE NEWS OF WATERLOO REACHES LONDON

*From Haydon's Journal. He was at this time engaged upon his picture, 'Christ's Entry into Jerusalem'.*

*June 23rd, 1815.* I had spent the evening with John Scott who lived in the Edgeware Road. I had stayed rather late, and was coming home to Great Marlborough Street, when in crossing Portman Square, a messenger from the Foreign Office came right up to me and said, 'which is Lord Harrowby's?'<sup>1</sup> The Duke has beat Napoleon, taken one hundred and fifty pieces of cannon, and is marching to Paris.' 'Is it true?' said I, quite bewildered. 'True!' said he; 'which is Lord Harrowby's?' Forgetting in my joy this was not Grosvenor Square, I said 'There,' pointing to the same point in Portman Square as Lord Harrowby's house occupies in Grosvenor Square, which happened to be Mrs. Boehm's where there was actually a rout. In rushed the messenger through servants and all, and I ran back again to Scott's. They were gone to bed, but I knocked them up and said, 'The Duke has beat Napoleon, taken one hundred and fifty pieces of cannon, and is marching to Paris.' Scott began to ask questions. I said, 'None

<sup>1</sup> Harrowby was Lord President of the Council in the Earl of Liverpool's Administration.—[*Ed.*]

of your questions; it's a fact,' and both of us said 'huzza!'

I went home and to bed; got up and to work: Sammons my model and corporal of the 2nd Life Guards came and we tried to do our duty; but Sammons was in such a fidget about his regiment charging, and I myself was in such a heat, I was obliged to let him go. Away he went, and I never saw him till late next day, and he then came drunk with talking. I read the Gazette the last thing before going to bed. I dreamt of it and was fighting all night; I got up in a steam of feeling and read the Gazette again, ordered a Courier for a month, called at a confectioner's and read all the papers till I was faint.

How singularly success operates on our minds! When Napoleon was at Moscow one thought of him as a tremendous being. I recollect arguing with Wilkie he could not stop. 'Ah but,' said he, 'he has got there!' One felt contempt when he abdicated, but when he left Elba and rushed to Paris, one shrunk as if in presence of a comet. Madame de Stäel said in 1814, '*Il n'est pas un homme, il est un système,*' and she acknowledged herself completely vanquished.

One could not think of the Duke and the British troops without tears. Their constancy and firmness, his genius and prudence, the manner in which they had worked their way to their splendid reputation against the prejudice of Europe and the insolence of the French was passionately interesting.

'Now,' thought I, 'will the Imperial Guard say again to me "*Napoléon n'était jamais battu*"?' I believe not. Even the French, vain and impudent as they are, must acknowledge it; and if the Allies do not think us too powerful and negative our influence, his destruction approaches.

## XIV. NAPOLEON: THE LAST PHASE

*After Waterloo Napoleon was imprisoned on the island of St. Helena, where he died on May 5, 1821. There was a good deal of unedifying wrangling over his treatment by Sir Hudson Lowe, the Governor. These lines are from Byron's satire The Age of Bronze, 1823.*

BUT where is he, the modern, mightier far,  
 Who, born no king, made monarchs draw his car;  
 The new Sesostris, whose unharnessed kings,  
 Freed from the bit, believe themselves with wings,  
 And spurn the dust o'er which they crawled of late,  
 Chained to the chariot of the Chieftain's state?  
 Yes! where is he, 'the champion and the child'  
 Of all that's great or little—wise or wild;  
 Whose game was Empire, and whose stakes were  
     thrones;  
 Whose table Earth—whose dice were human bones? 10  
 Behold the grand result in yon lone Isle,  
 And, as thy nature urges—weep or smile.  
 Sigh to behold the Eagle's lofty rage  
 Reduced to nibble at his narrow cage;  
 Smile to survey the queller of the nations  
 Now daily squabbling o'er disputed rations;  
 Weep to perceive him mourning, as he dines,  
 O'er curtailed dishes and o'er stinted wines;  
 O'er petty quarrels upon petty things.  
 Is this the Man who scourged or feasted kings? . . . 20  
 But smile—though all the pangs of brain and heart  
 Disdain, defy, the tardy aid of art;  
 Though, save the few fond friends and imaged face  
 Of that fair boy his Sire shall ne'er embrace,  
 None stand by his lone bed—though even the mind  
 Be wavering, which long awed and awes mankind:  
 Smile—for the fettered Eagle breaks his chain,  
 And higher Worlds than this are his again.

## XV. THE END OF THE WARS: A THANKS-GIVING ODE

*From Wordsworth's Ode, 1815. After proposing that commemoration services—with 'Songs of victory and praise' for England's defenders—should be held in Westminster Abbey, the poet continues:—*

NOR will the God of peace and love  
 Such martial service disapprove.  
 He guides the Pestilence—the cloud  
 Of locusts travels on his breath ;  
 The region that in hope was ploughed  
 His drought consumes, his mildew taints with death ;  
 He springs the hushed Volcano's mine,  
 He puts the Earthquake on her still design,  
 Darkens the sun, hath bade the forest sink,  
 And, drinking towns and cities, still can drink 10  
 Cities and towns—'tis Thou—the work is Thine !— . . .  
 But Thy most dreaded instrument,  
 In working out a pure intent,  
 Is Man—arrayed for mutual slaughter,  
 —Yea, Carnage is thy daughter !<sup>1</sup>  
 Thou cloth'st the wicked in their dazzling mail,  
 And for Thy righteous purpose they prevail ;  
 Thine arm from peril guards the coasts  
 Of them who in Thy laws delight :  
 Thy presence turns the scale of doubtful fight, 20  
 Tremendous God of battles, Lord of Hosts ! . . . .  
 To THEE—To THEE,  
 Just God of christianised Humanity,  
 Shall praises be poured forth, and thanks ascend,  
 That Thou hast brought our warfare to an end,  
 And that we need no second victory !  
 Blest, above measure blest,  
 If on Thy love our Land her hopes shall rest,  
 And all the Nations labour to fulfil  
 Thy law, and live henceforth in peace, in pure goodwill. 30

<sup>1</sup> Many readers were shocked by the tone of this passage ; but it was not altered till 1845.—[Ed.]



## XVI. AN EPIGRAM ON WAR

*By Ebenezer Elliott, the 'Corn-Law Rhymers'.*

THE victories of mind  
Are won for all mankind ;  
But war wastes what it wins,  
Ends worse than it begins,  
And is a game of woes,  
Which nations always lose :  
Though tyrant tyrant kill,  
The slayer liveth still.

## SECTION THREE

### THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

#### I. THE COMING OF THE INDUSTRIAL AGE

*This passage, from a discourse of the Wanderer, in The Excursion, Book VIII (1814), embodies Wordsworth's observations of the changes between about 1770 and 1810.*

##### AN inventive Age

Has wrought, if not with speed of magic, yet  
To most strange issues. I have lived to mark  
A new and unforeseen creation rise  
From out the labours of a peaceful Land  
Wielding her potent enginery to frame  
And to produce, with appetite as keen  
As that of war, which rests not night or day,  
Industrious to destroy! . . .  
The foot-path faintly marked, the horse-track wild, 10  
And formidable length of plashy lane,  
(Prized avenues ere others had been shaped  
Or easier links connecting place with place)  
Have vanished—swallowed up by stately roads  
Easy and bold, that penetrate the gloom  
Of Britain's farthest glens. The Earth has lent  
Her waters, Air her breezes; and the sail  
Of traffic glides with ceaseless intercourse,  
Glistening along the low and woody dale;  
Or, in its progress, on the lofty side 20  
Of some bare hill, with wonder kenned from far.

Meanwhile, at social Industry's command,  
How quick, how vast an increase! From the germ  
Of some poor hamlet, rapidly produced

Here a huge town, continuous and compact,  
 Hiding the face of earth for leagues—and there,  
 Where not a habitation stood before,  
 Abodes of men irregularly massed  
 Like trees in forests,—spread through spacious tracts,  
 O'er which the smoke of unremitting fires 30  
 Hangs permanent, and plentiful as wreaths  
 Of vapour glittering in the morning sun.  
 And, wheresoe'er the traveller turns his steps,  
 He sees the barren wilderness erased,  
 Or disappearing; triumph that proclaims  
 How much the mild Directress of the plough  
 Owes to alliance with these new-born arts!  
 —Hence is the wide sea peopled,—hence the shores  
 Of Britain are resorted to by ships  
 Freightened from every climate of the world 40  
 With the world's choicest produce. Hence that  
     sum  
 Of keels that rest within her crowded ports,  
 Or ride at anchor in her sounds and bays;  
 That animating spectacle of sails  
 That, through her inland regions, to and fro  
 Pass with the respirations of the tide,  
 Perpetual, multitudinous! Finally,  
 Hence a dread arm of floating power, a voice  
 Of thunder daunting those who would approach  
 With hostile purposes the blessèd Isle, 50  
 Truth's consecrated residence, the seat  
 Impregnable of Liberty and Peace.

## II. THE POWER OF STEAM: ACHIEVEMENTS, AND A PROPHECY

*Up to 1792 the chief uses to which the steam-engine had been put were for pumping—in draining mine-shafts and in filling reservoirs. It was just beginning to be applied to manufactures; but the railway did not arrive till towards 1830, and the aeroplane, which required the petrol engine, some eighty years later. Erasmus Darwin, the grandfather of the naturalist Charles Darwin, here gives us (in The Economy*

of Vegetation, *Canto I*, 1792) *an accurate if somewhat flowery survey of the situation towards the end of the eighteenth century.*

THE Giant-Power from earth's remotest caves  
Lifts with strong arm her dark reluctant waves :  
Each cavern'd rock, and hidden den explores,  
Drags her dark coals, and digs her shining ores. . . .

Here high in air the rising stream he pours  
To clay-built cisterns, or to lead-lin'd towers ;  
Fresh thro' a thousand pipes the wave distils,  
And thirsty cities drink the exuberant rills.  
There the vast mill-stone with inebriate whirl  
On trembling floors his forceful fingers twirl, 10  
Whose flinty teeth the golden harvests grind,  
Feast without blood ! and nourish human-kind. . . .

Soon shall thy arm, UNCONQUER'D STEAM ! afar  
Drag the slow barge, or drive the rapid car ;  
Or on wide-waving wings expanded bear  
The flying-chariot through the fields of air.  
—Fair crews triumphant, leaning from above,  
Shall wave their fluttering kerchiefs as they move ;  
Or warrior-bands alarm the gaping crowd,  
And armies shrink beneath the shadowy cloud. 20

### III. STEAM MACHINERY AND THE EARLY MANUFACTURERS

*In the generation following the French Revolution the most startling economic and social changes were those due to improvements in the machinery for manufactures, combined with the replacement, as a means of driving the machinery, of power derived from waterfalls by that of steam-engines. The results in the textile industry are described in these extracts from The Manufacturing Population of England (1833), by P. Gaskell.*

ONE of the most striking revolutions ever produced in the moral and social condition of a moiety of a great nation, is that which has been consequent to the application of steam to machinery. . . . One great effect of the steam-engine has been, to crowd workmen together ; to collect them from parts in which they had hitherto formed por-

tions of a scattered population. But the cause, powerful as it is, has been aided by many others of scarcely less efficacy; and it is these which require elucidation, as they throw a strong light upon the present depraved and debased condition of the class of manufacturing labourers.

Many of the first successful manufacturers were men who had their origin in the rank of mere operatives, or who sprung from the extinct class of yeomen. . . . The celerity with which some of these individuals accumulated wealth in the early times of steam spinning and weaving, are proofs—if any such were wanting—that they were men of quick views, great energy of character, and possessing no small share of sagacity; and were by these means able to avail themselves to the utmost of the golden advantages, which were presented to their grasp, from 1790 to 1817, a time when they supplied the whole universe with the products of manufacture.

But they were men of very limited general information—men who saw and knew little of any thing beyond the demand for their twist or cloth, and the speediest and best modes for their production. They were, however, from their acquired station, men who exercised very considerable influence upon the hordes of workmen who became dependent upon them. . . .

The extreme rapidity with which the returns were made for a considerable period—and this too with an immense profit—and the rich and apparently unbounded prospect that was stretched out before them, fairly turned their heads. In this respect, indeed, they resembled the man in the Arabian Nights' tale, whose eye had been touched with the magic ointment, and which in consequence presented to his mental vision an endless display of wealth. The uproarious enjoyments,—the sensual indulgences, which were witnessed at the orgies of these men, totally unchecked by any intercourse with more polished society, should have had the veil of oblivion drawn over them, were it not that, to some degree, they tend to explain the depravity which in a few years, like a moral plague,

spread over the manufacturing population, wherever they were brought together in numerous bodies. . . .

Master cotton-spinners and weavers, then, at the commencement of this important epoch, were in many instances men sprung from the ranks of the labourers, or from a grade just removed above these—uneducated—of coarse habits—sensual in their enjoyments—partaking of the rude revelry of their dependants—overwhelmed by success—but yet, paradoxical as it may sound, industrious men, and active and far-sighted tradesmen.

Many of these might be found, after a night spent in debauchery and licentiousness, sobered down by an hour or two of rest, and by the ringing of the factory bell, going through the business of the day with untiring activity and unerring rectitude—surrounded too, as they were, by their companions, alike busily engaged under their inspection—again to plunge, at the expiration of the hours of labour, into the same vortex of inebriation and riot.

#### IV. CHILD LABOUR IN COTTON FACTORIES:

##### I

##### AN ATTACK

*A conversation (in Southey's Letters from England, 1807) between the writer and a Manchester gentleman who is showing him over the cotton factories.*

MR. ——— remarked that nothing could be so beneficial to a country as manufactures. 'You see these children, sir,' said he. 'In most parts of England poor children are a burthen to their parents and to the parish; here the parish, which would else have to support them, is rid of all expense; they get their bread almost as soon as they can run about, and by the time they are seven or eight years old bring in money. There is no idleness among us:—they come at five in the morning; we allow them half an hour for breakfast, and an hour for dinner; they leave work at six, and another set relieves them for the night; the wheels never stand still.' I was looking,



while he spoke, at the unnatural dexterity with which the fingers of these little creatures were playing in the machinery, half giddy myself with the noise and the endless motion ; and when he told me there was no rest in these walls, day nor night, I thought that if Dante had peopled one of his hells with children, here was a scene worthy to have supplied him with new images of torment.

‘ These children, then,’ said I, ‘ have no time to receive instruction.’ ‘ That, sir,’ he replied, ‘ is the evil which we have found. Girls are employed here from the age you see them till they marry, and then they know nothing about domestic work, not even how to mend a stocking or boil a potatoe. But we are remedying this now, and send the children to school for an hour after they have done work.’ I asked if so much confinement did not injure their health. ‘ No,’ he replied, ‘ they are as healthy as any children in the world could be. To be sure, many of them as they grew up went off in consumptions, but consumption was the disease of the English.’ . . . .

‘ We are well off for hands in Manchester,’ said Mr. — ; ‘ manufactures are favourable to population, the poor are not afraid of having a family here, the parishes therefore have always plenty to apprentice, and we take them as fast as they can supply us. In new manufacturing towns they find it difficult to get a supply. Their only method is to send people round the country to get children from their parents. Women usually undertake this business ; they promise the parents to provide for the children ; one party is glad to be eased of a burthen, and it answers well to the other to find the young ones in food, lodging and clothes, and receive their wages.’ ‘ But if these children should be ill-used ? ’ said I. ‘ Sir,’ he replied, ‘ it never can be the interest of the women to use them ill, nor of the manufacturers to permit it.’

It would have been in vain to argue had I been disposed to it. Mr. — was a man of humane and kindly nature, who would not himself use any thing cruelly, and judged of others by his own feelings. I thought of the cities in

Arabian romance, where all the inhabitants were enchanted : here Commerce is the queen witch, and I had no talisman strong enough to disenchant those who were daily drinking of the golden cup of her charms.

## II

## A MATTER-OF-FACT ACCOUNT

*Southey's account, though the facts are correct, is strongly coloured by his passionate hatred of child-labour. But most people, until the Earl of Shaftesbury began his agitation for Factory Reform in the thirties, took child-labour as a matter of course—in factories just as previously on farms. This may be seen from the description (in The History of Holywell Parish, 1796), by Thomas Pennant the naturalist and topographical writer, of a mill at Holywell in North Wales, in which about a quarter of the workers were children. This was a well-conducted factory : what might occur elsewhere may be inferred from Pennant's last paragraph.*

ALL the cotton-mills on the river go under the name of the Cotton Twist Company. It is to Mr. Christopher Smalley, one of the partners, the eldest son to the founder of these great manufactories, I am obliged for the account of what relates to them.

The cotton-twist company have between three and four hundred apprentices, which they clothe and feed themselves, in commodious houses built for that purpose, the boys and girls in separate houses. These houses are white-washed twice every year, are fumigated three times a week through every apartment, with smoak of tobacco ; besides this the sleeping-rooms are washed twice a week, and the bed-stocks are frequently sprinkled with rectified oil of tar. All the windows in the sleeping-rooms open at the tops, by which a thorough draft of air is admitted during the whole time the children are at work. To these and other precautions the good state of health of so many children may be justly attributed ; for though the number of apprentices have not been less than 300 for these seven years past, they have only buried seven. Their food for dinner is beef or pork and potatoes three

or four times a week, the other days herrings and potatoes, or soup and bread and cheese, as much as they please to eat. Their breakfasts and suppers in summer is milk and bread; in the winter, when milk cannot be had, they drink porridge or broth, with bread and cheese. A surgeon is appointed to superintend their health; and a *Sunday* school is regularly attended by a master at each house.

Our little children sleep three in a bed, the larger sizes only two; and those who work in the night are so far from succeeding each other in the same beds, that they do not even sleep in the same rooms.

### III

#### A DEFENCE

*A passage from The Philosophy of Manufactures (1835), by Andrew Ure, typical of the mill-owners' point of view during the agitation for factory control which led to the Acts of 1833 and 1847.*

No master would wish to have any wayward children to work within the walls of his factory, who do not mind their business without beating, and he therefore usually fines or turns away any spinners who are known to maltreat their assistants. Hence, ill-usage of any kind is a very rare occurrence. I have visited many factories, both in Manchester and in the surrounding districts, during a period of several months, entering the spinning rooms, unexpectedly, and often alone, at different times of the day, and I never saw a single instance of corporal chastisement inflicted on a child, nor indeed did I ever see children in ill-humour. They seemed to be always cheerful and alert, taking pleasure in the light play of their muscles,—enjoying the mobility natural to their age. The scene of industry, so far from exciting sad emotions in my mind, was always exhilarating. It was delightful to observe the nimbleness with which they pieced the broken ends, as the mule-carriage began to recede from the fixed roller-beam, and to see them at leisure, after a few

seconds' exercise of their tiny fingers, to amuse themselves in any attitude they chose, till the stretch and winding-on were once more completed. The work of these lively elves seemed to resemble a sport, in which habit gave them a pleasing dexterity. Conscious of their skill, they were delighted to show it off to any stranger. As to exhaustion by the day's work, they evinced no trace of it on emerging from the mill in the evening; for they immediately began to skip about any neighbouring playground, and to commence their little amusements with the same alacrity as boys issuing from a school. It is moreover my firm conviction, that if children are not ill-used by bad parents or guardians, but receive in food and raiment the full benefit of what they earn, they would thrive better when employed in our modern factories, than if left at home in apartments too often ill-aired, damp, and cold.

## V. THE MARCH OF PROGRESS: 1821

*From Real Life in London, By An Amateur, a popular illustrated book, half fiction, half fact. The Hon. Tom Dashall is taking his 'country cousin', Bob Tallyho, for a drive through London to show him the sights.*

'WHETHER upon true foundations or not, every generation think the age they live in is the most enlightened. . . . It is certain, however, that scarcely a day passes but some new invention or improvement is offered to public notice. The perusal of the newspapers is an evidence of my assertion; and as London is the centre of attraction, so it is the seat of knowledge, of science and information.'

'I should judge, that if a person who had lived some two hundred years ago, even in this wild place, were to rise up amongst us, his surprise and astonishment would be strongly excited,' said BOB, endeavouring to draw forth more of his observations as they bowled along the road.

'There can be no question on that subject,' said TOM, 'for how would the high ideas he entertained of the

ingenuity of the age in which he had lived, dwindle into nothing ! Nay, should he appear in the country first, what would he think of the various implements of husbandry, for ploughing, and preparing the land ; the different machines for sowing the corn, for threshing, grinding, and dressing it ; . . . Then, should he take a peep at London, as we are now doing, he would be struck dumb with admiration. But here we are on the Waterloo Road. . . . We will alight here and walk leisurely across, taking time for remark.'

The servants now took charge of the curricule, with orders to wait at the corner of the Strand, while our heroes, having each deposited his penny at the toll-house, strolled forward.

TALLYHO appeared delighted with the views around him : in the front, a fine prospect of one of the finest cities in the world, and behind an equally pleasing sight over the Surry hills. The day being fine, and the sun darting his refulgent beams on the bosom of the Thames, contributed to form, altogether, one of the most enraptured sights he had ever beheld. The passing and repassing of boats and barges below ; and carriages, horsemen, and pedestrians, crossing the bridge, alternately attracted his attention. . . .

At this moment the sound of music attracted the ears of TALLYHO.

'What have we here ?' said he, thrusting his head through the balustrades, by which he found himself almost suffocated with smoke, which stopped further enquiry.

'Behold,' said TOM, 'another improvement of the age ; that is the Richmond Steam Boat, proceeding with a cargo of live stock to that celebrated place of public resort, and, in spite of wind and weather, will return in the evening. They always have a band of music on board, for the amusement of their passengers.'

'Zounds,' said BOB, 'they ought to have a smoke-consumer.'

'They had one just now,' replied TOM ; 'for I appre-



hend you assisted them in some degree, though not voluntarily.'

'You are smoking me,' said BOB.

'Never mind, you have only been puffing a cloud.'

'However, as the mist is dispelled,' said TALLYHO, 'and we have a clear sky before us again, let us make use of our senses.'

'To the right you perceive Blackfriars Bridge, and beyond that the Southwark Bridge. By the way, we were speaking of the alterations to be witnessed in a country life. We will now pursue the subject, and suppose for a moment our two-hundred-years-ago friend, after his visit among the Swains, inclined to transfer his observations to the Great Town. The first question would be, How shall I get there? Oh, there are plenty of night coaches, and day coaches too, Sir. Well, then fancy him seated in a night coach, and having supped on the road, on resuming his corner of the vehicle, he falls into a sound sleep. Guess what must be his surprise on waking in the morning, to find himself in the bustle and apparent confusion of the streets of the Metropolis. But how altered! Wide streets and upright houses, instead of narrow lanes with houses meeting each other at the tops. Then what elegant shops!—He would exclaim, rubbing his eyes, "Why, this is all a dream

Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain!

"It cannot be reality!"—However, he swallows a hasty breakfast, and sallies out again to look about him. From London Bridge he espies the one I have just mentioned, the Southwark Bridge.—"What have we here?"—"Oh, Sir, that is the cast-iron bridge, with three arches over the Thames." He hastens to it, and when upon it, what must be his astonishment, at the power of the human mind to form, and of the human body to bring together, such immense pieces of iron? . . . "Zounds," he would exclaim, "if the race of man dwindle in stature, they grow daily more stupendous in intellect!" But we will suppose, like you, with an anxiety to see all that can be



seen, he perceives a machine sailing down the river with astonishing velocity; "Why, formerly," said he, "wind and tide against a vessel were insurmountable obstacles in its passage, but now they seem to add to its swiftness; how is this to be accounted for?"—"Easily enough," replies a bye-stander; "Lord bless you, it's all done by steam. Hot water and smoke do every thing now-a-days! Why, there are a great number of machines, which formerly required from two to forty or more horses each to put and keep in motion, entirely worked by the steam arising from boiling water."—"PRODIGIOUS! Steam do all that! ASTONISHING!" . . .

'Well, we will pursue the train of thought a little further: suppose, perambulating the streets till he is quite tired, and seeing alterations and changes out of number, he enters a Coffee House, eats a hearty meal, and taking a glass or two of wine, he falls into a musing train of ideas of the wonders he has been witnessing, from which he is not disturbed till the hoarse voice of a *Charley* [watchman] sounds in his ear, "Past ten o'clock, and a cloudy night," at which he hastily starts up, discharges his bill, and prepares, by buttoning up close and securing his trusty stick, for (as he would naturally expect) a dull dreary walk. He sallies out thus equipped, and, to his utter astonishment, finds the streets as busy as in the middle of the day, and almost as light. He steps up to one of the lights to examine it—"What can this be? It is not oil, there is no vessel to contain it; surely this can't be steam also! But what can it be?"—"Gas, Sir," says a passenger, who overhears the question, "Gas; it is produced from coals set on fire and confined in a furnace, the subtle vapour from which is conveyed by means of pipes, and, light applied to it, immediately bursts into a flame." His astonishment would now be complete, and if he did sleep after, it would be difficult to persuade him it was not all a dream.'

## VI. THE STATE OF ENGLAND IN 1819

*In this sonnet Shelley refers to the insanity of George III, ' Peterloo ' and similar disturbances, and the repressive government of the Tories.*

AN old, mad, blind, despised, and dying king,—  
 Princes, the dregs of their dull race, who flow  
 Through public scorn,—mud from a muddy spring,—  
 Rulers who neither see, nor feel, nor know,  
 But leech-like to their fainting country cling,  
 Till they drop, blind in blood, without a blow,—  
 A people starved and stabbed in the untilled field,—  
 An army, which liberticide and prey  
 Makes as a two-edged sword to all who wield,—  
 Golden and sanguine laws which tempt and slay ;      10  
 Religion Christless, Godless—a book sealed ;  
 A Senate,—Time's worst statute unrepealed,—  
 Are graves, from which a glorious Phantom may  
 Burst, to illumine our tempestuous day.

## VII. THE SPIRIT OF REVOLT AND THE DUTIES OF GOVERNMENT

*From Sir Thomas More: or, Colloquies on the Progress and Prospects of Society, by Robert Southey—begun in 1817 and finished in 1829. It is a series of imaginary conversations between the shade of Sir Thomas More and ' Montesinos ' (a name taken from Don Quixote), who is Southey himself. At this period the poet was a violent anti-democrat, but also a keen social reformer.*

*Sir Thomas More.*—In a country where one part of the community enjoys the highest advantages of civilization with which any people upon this globe have ever in any stage been favoured, there is among the lower classes a mass of ignorance, vice and wretchedness, which no generous heart can contemplate without grief ; and which, when the other signs of the times are considered, may reasonably excite alarm for the fabric of society that rests upon such a base. . . . Old Thomas Tusser's coarse remedy is the only one which legislators have yet thought of applying !

*Montesinos*.—What remedy is that ?

*Sir Thomas More*.—'Twas the husbandman's practice in his days and mine :

Where plots full of nettles annoyeth the eye,  
Sow hempseed among them, and nettles will die.

*Montesinos*.—The use of hemp indeed has not been spared. But with so little avail has it been used,—or rather to such ill effect, that every public execution, instead of deterring villains from guilt, serves only to afford them opportunity for it. . . .

*Sir Thomas More*.—And yet the inefficacious punishment of guilt is less to be deplored and less to be condemned than the total omission of all means for preventing it. Many thousands in your metropolis rise every morning without knowing how they are to subsist during the day ; or, many of them, where they are to lay their heads at night. All men, even the vicious themselves, know that wickedness leads to misery ; but many, even among the good and the wise, have yet to learn that misery is almost as often the cause of wickedness.

*Montesinos*.—There are many who know this, but believe that it is not in the power of human institutions to prevent this misery. They see the effect, but regard the causes as inseparable from the condition of human nature.

*Sir Thomas More*.—As surely as God is good, so surely there is no such thing as necessary evil. For by the religious mind sickness and pain and death are not to be accounted evils. Moral evils are of your own making ; and undoubtedly the greater part of them may be prevented. . . .

*Montesinos*.—The consequences of defective order are indeed frightful, whether we regard the physical or the moral evils which are produced.

*Sir Thomas More*.—And not less frightful when the political evils are contemplated ! To the dangers of an oppressive and iniquitous order, such for example as exists where negro slavery is established, you are fully

awake in England : but to those of defective order among yourselves, though they are precisely of the same nature, you are blind. And yet you have spirits among you who are labouring day and night to stir up a *bellum servile*, an insurrection like that of Wat Tyler, of the Jacquerie, and of the peasants in Germany. There is no provocation for this, as there was in all those dreadful convulsions of society : but there are misery and ignorance and desperate wickedness to work upon, which the want of order has produced. Think for a moment what London,—nay, what the whole kingdom would be, were your Catilines to succeed in exciting as general an insurrection as that which was raised by one madman in your own childhood !<sup>1</sup> Imagine the infatuated and infuriated wretches, whom not Spitalfields, St. Giles's, and Pimlico alone, but all the lanes and alleys and cellars of the metropolis would pour out ;—a frightful population, whose multitudes, when gathered together, might almost exceed belief ! The streets of London would appear to teem with them, like the land of Egypt with its plague of frogs ; and the lava floods from a volcano would be less destructive than the hordes whom your great cities and manufacturing districts would vomit forth ! . . .

*Montesinos*.—When you call upon me to consider the sinfulness of this nation, my heart fails. There can be no health, no soundness in the state, till Government shall regard the moral improvement of the people as its first great duty. The same remedy is required for the rich and for the poor. . . . We are, in a great degree, what our institutions make us. Gracious God ! were those institutions adapted to Thy will and word,—were we but broken in from childhood to Thy easy yoke,—were we but carefully instructed to believe and obey,—in that obedience and belief we should surely find **our** temporal welfare and our eternal happiness !

<sup>1</sup> The 'Gordon Riots' of 1780 ; instigated by **the** fanatical No-Property agitator, Lord George Gordon.—[*Ed.*]

## VIII. POST-WAR TAXATION

*In an article on America* (Edinburgh Review, 1820), *Sydney Smith the Whig divine* points out some consequences of a prolonged war, in addition to military glory.

WE can inform Jonathan what are the inevitable consequences of being too fond of glory;—TAXES upon every article which enters into the mouth, or covers the back, or is placed under the foot—taxes upon every thing which it is pleasant to see, hear, feel, smell, or taste—taxes upon warmth, light, and locomotion—taxes on every thing on earth, and the waters under the earth—on every thing that comes from abroad, or is grown at home—taxes on the raw material—taxes on every fresh value that is added to it by the industry of man—taxes on the sauce which pampers man's appetite, and the drug that restores him to health—on the ermine which decorates the judge, and the rope which hangs the criminal—on the poor man's salt, and the rich man's spice—on the brass nails of the coffin, and the ribands of the bride—at bed or board, couchant or levant, we must pay.—The schoolboy whips his taxed top—the beardless youth manages his taxed horse, with a taxed bridle, on a taxed road:—and the dying Englishman, pouring his medicine, which has paid 7 per cent., into a spoon that has paid 15 per cent.—flings himself back upon his chintz bed, which has paid 22 per cent.—and expires in the arms of an apothecary who has paid a licence of a hundred pounds for the privilege of putting him to death. His whole property is then immediately taxed from 2 to 10 per cent. Besides the probate, large fees are demanded for burying him in the chancel; his virtues are handed down to posterity on taxed marble; and he is then gathered to his fathers—to be taxed no more.



*From Byron's satirical poem The Age of Bronze (1823).—In 1820 as in 1920 a great war had brought in its train a period of depression. The landed interest had been making large profits during the war from the high price of corn ; much money had been sunk in improving the land ; and rents had risen with prices. After the war there was an immediate slump in rents and prices ; many farmers were ruined, and landowners everywhere clamoured for protection. The landed interest was in control of the as yet unreformed Parliament, which consequently passed (in 1815) a new Corn Law, prohibiting the import of foreign corn until the price of wheat in England should reach 80s. a quarter. This meant that, at a time of low wages and great distress and unemployment, the worker could not hope for cheap corn from abroad until the price of the quartern loaf reached 1s. 4d. Two further Acts in 1824 and 1828 substituted a sliding scale of duties for total prohibition, but this made no substantial difference.*

ALAS, the Country ! how shall tongue or pen  
Bewail her now *uncountry* gentlemen ?  
The last to bid the cry of warfare cease,  
The first to make a malady of peace.  
For what were all these country patriots born ?  
To hunt—and vote—and raise the price of corn ?  
But corn, like every mortal thing, must fall,  
Kings—Conquerors—and markets most of all.  
And must ye fall with every ear of grain ?  
Why would you trouble Buonaparté's reign ? 10  
He was your great Triptolemus ; his vices  
Destroyed but realms, and still maintained your prices ;  
He amplified to every lord's content  
The grand agrarian alchymy, high *rent*.  
Why did the tyrant stumble on the Tartars,  
And lower wheat to such desponding quarters ?  
Why did you chain him on yon Isle so lone ?  
The man was worth much more upon his throne.  
True, blood and treasure boundlessly were spilt,  
But what of that ? the Gaul may bear the guilt ; 20  
But bread was high, the farmer paid his way,  
And acres told upon the appointed day.



But where is now the goodly audit ale ?  
 The purse-proud tenant, never known to fail ?  
 The farm which never yet was left on hand ?  
 The marsh reclaimed to most improving land ?  
 The impatient hope of the expiring lease ?  
 The doubling rental ? What an evil's peace !  
 In vain the prize excites the ploughman's skill,  
 In vain the Commons pass their patriot bill ; 30  
 The *Landed Interest*—(you may understand  
 The phrase much better leaving out the *land*)—  
 The land self-interest groans from shore to shore,  
 For fear that plenty should attain the poor.  
 Up, up again, ye rents, exalt your notes,  
 Or else the Ministry will lose their votes,  
 And patriotism, so delicately nice,  
 Her loaves will lower to the market price. . . .  
 See these inglorious Cincinnati swarm,  
 Farmers of war, dictators of the farm ; 40  
*Their* ploughshare was the sword in hireling hands,  
*Their* fields manured by gore of other lands ;  
 Safe in their barns, these Sabine tillers sent  
 Their brethren out to battle—why ? for rent !  
 Year after year they voted cent. per cent.  
 Blood, sweat, and tear-wrung millions—why ?—for rent !  
 They roared, they dined, they drank, they swore they  
 meant  
 To die for England—why then live ?—for rent !  
 The peace has made one general malcontent  
 Of these high-market patriots ; war was rent ! 50  
 Their love of country, millions all mis-spent,  
 How reconcile ? by reconciling rent !  
 And will they not repay the treasures lent ?  
 No : down with everything, and up with rent !  
 Their good, ill, health, wealth, joy, or discontent,  
 Being, end, aim, religion—*rent—rent—rent !*

## X. COTTON AND CORN: A DIALOGUE

*The laws restricting the importation of foreign corn naturally pressed with greatest severity on the workers in cotton and other factories. Riots against them occurred as early as 1815; in 1827 (when these verses, by the poet Tom Moore, were written) an abortive attempt was made to relax them; but the repeal was not finally carried until 1846.*

SAID Cotton to Corn, t'other day,  
 As they met and exchang'd a salute—  
 (Squire Corn in his carriage so gay,  
 Poor Cotton, half famish'd, on foot):

'Great Squire, if it isn't uncivil  
 'To hint at starvation before you,  
 'Look down on a poor hungry devil,  
 'And give him some bread, I implore you!'

Quoth Corn then, in answer to Cotton,  
 Perceiving he meant to make *free*— 10  
 'Low fellow, you've surely forgotten  
 'The distance between you and me!

'To expect that we, Peers of high birth,  
 'Should waste our illustrious acres,  
 'For no other purpose on earth  
 'Than to fatten curst calico-makers!—

'That Bishops to bobbins should bend—  
 'Should stoop from their Bench's sublimity,  
 'Great dealers in *lawn*, to befriend  
 'Such contemptible dealers in dimity! 20

'No—vile Manufacture! ne'er harbour  
 'A hope to be fed at our boards;—  
 'Base offspring of Arkwright the barber,<sup>1</sup>  
 'What claim canst *thou* have upon Lords?

<sup>1</sup> Sir Richard Arkwright (1732–1792), the inventor of the water-frame for spinning, began life as a barber's apprentice.—[Ed.]

‘No—thanks to the taxes and debt,  
 ‘And the triumph of paper o’er guineas,  
 ‘Our race of Lord Jemmys, as yet,  
 ‘May defy your whole rabble of *Jennys*!’

So saying—whip, crack, and away  
 Went Corn in his chaise through the throng, 30  
 So headlong, I heard them all say,  
 ‘Squire Corn would be *down*, before long.’

## XI. A ‘CORN-LAW RHYME’

*Ebenezer Elliott, a Yorkshire iron-worker, almost self-taught, rose to fame in the thirties for his mordant verses on the sufferings of the poor from the dearth of bread.*

TUNE—‘Robin Adair’.

CHILD, is thy father dead?  
 Father is gone!  
 Why did they tax his bread?  
 God’s will be done!  
 Mother has sold her bed;  
 Better to die than wed!  
 Where shall she lay her head?  
 Home we have none!

Father clamm’d <sup>1</sup> thrice a week—  
 God’s will be done!

10

Long for work did he seek,  
 Work he found none.  
 Tears on his hollow cheek  
 Told what no tongue could speak.  
 Why did his master break?  
 God’s will be done!

Doctor said air was best—  
 Food we had none;  
 Father, with panting breast,  
 Groan’d to be gone:

20

<sup>1</sup> Fasted, went hungry.—[Ed.]

Now he is with the blest—  
 Mother says death is best !  
 We have no place of rest—  
 Yes, ye have one !

## XII. MECHANICAL PROGRESS AND NATIONAL WELFARE

*From the poet Coleridge's tract On the Constitution of the Church and State (1830).*

WELL and truly has the understanding been defined—*facultas mediata et mediorum*—the faculty of means to medial ends, that is, to such purposes or ends as are themselves but means to some ulterior end.

My eye at this moment rests on a volume newly read by me, containing a well-written history of the inventions, discoveries, public improvements, docks, rail-ways, canals, and the like, for about the same period, in England and Scotland. I closed it under the strongest impressions of awe, and admiration akin to wonder. We live, I exclaimed, under the dynasty of the understanding : and this is its golden age.

It is the faculty of means to medial ends. With these the age, this favoured land, teems : they spring up, the armed host,—*seges clypeata*—from the serpent's teeth sown by Cadmus :

——*mortalia semina, dentes.*

In every direction they advance, conquering and to conquer. Sea and land, rock, mountain, lake and moor, yea nature and all her elements, sink before them, or yield themselves captive ! But the ultimate ends ? Where shall I seek for information concerning these ? . . .

We have game laws, corn laws, cotton factories, Spital-fields, the tillers of the land paid by poor rates, and the remainder of the population mechanized into engines for the manufactory of new rich men ;—yea, the machinery of the wealth of the nation made up of the wretchedness, disease and depravity of those who should constitute the

strength of the nation ! Disease, I say, and vice, while the wheels are in full motion ; but at the first stop the magic wealth-machine is converted into an intolerable weight of pauperism. . . .

But enough. I will ask only one question. Has the national welfare, have the weal and happiness of the people, advanced with the increase of the circumstantial prosperity ? Is the increasing number of wealthy individuals that which ought to be understood by the wealth of the nation ?

### XIII. THE 'NATURAL PROGRESS OF SOCIETY'

*More typical of the coming age than the subtlety of Coleridge or the moral seriousness of Southey and Wordsworth is the buoyant optimism of their junior Macaulay. This extract should be compared with that from Southey's Colloquies (above, pp. 47-9), of which Macaulay's article (Edinburgh Review, January 1830) was a hostile notice.*

WE rely on the natural tendency of the human intellect to truth, and on the natural tendency of society to improvement. We know no well authenticated instance of a people which has decidedly retrograded in civilisation and prosperity, except from the influence of violent and terrible calamities, such as those which laid the Roman empire in ruins, or those which, about the beginning of the sixteenth century, desolated Italy. We know of no country which, at the end of fifty years of peace and tolerably good government, has been less prosperous than at the beginning of that period. . . .

History is full of the signs of this natural progress of society. We see in almost every part of the annals of mankind how the industry of individuals, struggling up against wars, taxes, famines, conflagrations, mischievous prohibitions, and more mischievous protections, creates faster than governments can squander, and repairs whatever invaders can destroy. We see the wealth of nations increasing, and all the arts of life approaching nearer and

nearer to perfection, in spite of the grossest corruption and the wildest profusion on the part of rulers.

The present moment [1830] is one of great distress. But how small will that distress appear when we think over the history of the last forty years ; a war, compared with which all other wars sink into insignificance ; taxation, such as the most heavily taxed people of former times could not have conceived ; a debt larger than all the public debts that ever existed in the world added together ; the food of the people studiously rendered dear ; the currency imprudently debased, and imprudently restored. Yet is the country poorer than in 1790 ? We firmly believe that, in spite of all the misgovernment of her rulers, she has been almost constantly becoming richer and richer. Now and then there has been a stoppage, now and then a short retrogression ; but as to the general tendency there can be no doubt. A single breaker may recede ; but the tide is evidently coming in.

If we were to prophesy that in the year 1930 a population of fifty millions, better fed, clad and lodged than the English of our time, will cover these islands, that Sussex and Huntingdonshire will be wealthier than the wealthiest parts of the West Riding of Yorkshire now are, that cultivation, rich as that of a flower-garden, will be carried up to the very tops of Ben Nevis and Helvellyn, that machines constructed on principles yet undiscovered, will be in every house, that there will be no highways but rail-roads, no travelling but by steam, that our debt, vast as it seems to us, will appear to our great-grandchildren a trifling incumbrance, which might easily be paid off in a year or two, many people would think us insane. We prophesy nothing ; but this we say : If any person had told the Parliament which met in perplexity and terror after the crash in 1720 [the collapse of the ' South Sea Bubble ' ] that in 1830 the wealth of England would surpass all their wildest dreams, that the annual revenue would equal the principal of that debt which they considered as an intolerable burden, that for one man of ten thousand pounds



then living there would be five men of fifty thousand pounds, that London would be twice as large and twice as populous, and that nevertheless the rate of mortality would have diminished to one half of what it then was, that the post-office would bring more into the exchequer than the excise and customs had brought in together under Charles the Second, that stage-coaches would run from London to York in twenty-four hours, that men would be in the habit of sailing without wind, and would be beginning to ride without horses, our ancestors would have given as much credit to the prediction as they gave to Gulliver's Travels. Yet the prediction would have been true. . . .

It is not by the intermeddling of Mr. Southey's idol, the omniscient and omnipotent State, but by the prudence and energy of the people, that England has hitherto been carried forward in civilisation ; and it is to the same prudence and the same energy that we now look with comfort and good hope. Our rulers will best promote the improvement of the nation by strictly confining themselves to their own legitimate duties, by leaving capital to find its most lucrative course, commodities their fair price, industry and intelligence their natural reward, idleness and folly their natural punishment, by maintaining peace, by defending property, by diminishing the price of law, and by observing strict economy in every department of the state. Let the Government do this : the People will assuredly do the rest.

## SECTION FOUR

### STATESMEN: PARLIAMENT

#### I. FOX, BURKE, AND PITT

*From Hazlitt's 'Character of Mr. Fox' in The Eloquence of the British Senate (1807).—Edmund Burke, Charles James Fox, and William Pitt the younger were by far the greatest statesmen between the Earl of Chatham and the days of Gladstone and Disraeli. Hazlitt, who was a republican, shows here a strong bias against Pitt; but it remains true that this great man inspired his contemporaries with admiration rather than affection.*

I SHALL begin with observing generally, that Mr. Fox excelled all his contemporaries in the extent of his knowledge, in the clearness and distinctness of his views, in quickness of apprehension, in plain, practical common sense, in the full, strong, and absolute possession of his subject. A measure was no sooner proposed than he seemed to have an instantaneous and intuitive perception of its various bearings and consequences; of the manner in which it would operate on the different classes of society, on commerce or agriculture, on our domestic or foreign policy; of the difficulties attending its execution; in a word, of all its practical results, and the comparative advantages to be gained either by adopting or rejecting it. . . .

If to this we add the ardour and natural impetuosity of his mind, his quick sensibility, his eagerness in the defence of truth, and his impatience of every thing that looked like trick or artifice or affectation, we shall be able in some measure to account for the character of his eloquence. His thoughts came crowding in too fast for the slow and mechanical process of speech. What he saw

in an instant, he could only express imperfectly, word by word, and sentence after sentence. He would, if he could, 'have bared his swelling heart,' and laid open at once the rich treasures of knowledge with which his bosom was fraught. It is no wonder that this difference between the rapidity of his feelings, and the formal round-about method of communicating them, should produce some disorder in his frame; that the throng of his ideas should try to overleap the narrow boundaries which confined them, and tumultuously break down their prison-doors, instead of waiting to be let out one by one, and following patiently and at due intervals and with mock dignity, like poor dependents, in the train of words:—that he should express himself in hurried sentences, in involuntary exclamations, by vehement gestures, by sudden starts and bursts of passion. Every thing shewed the agitation of his mind. His tongue faltered, his voice became almost suffocated, and his face was bathed in tears. He was lost in the magnitude of his subject. He reeled and staggered under the load of feeling which oppressed him. He rolled like the sea beaten by a tempest. Whoever, having the feelings of a man, compared him at these times with his boasted rival [Pitt],—his stiff, straight, upright figure, his gradual contortions, turning round as if moved by a pivot, his solemn pauses, his deep tones, 'whose sound reverbed their own hollowness,' must have said, This is a man; that is an automaton. If Fox had needed grace, he would have had it; but it was not the character of his mind, nor would it have suited with the style of his eloquence. It was Pitt's object to smooth over the abruptness and intricacies of his argument by the gracefulness of his manner, and to fix the attention of his hearers on the pomp and sound of his words. . . .

I find (I do not know how the reader feels) that it is difficult to write a character of Fox without running into insipidity or extravagance. And the reason of this is, there are no splendid contrasts, no striking irregularities, no curious distinctions to work upon; no 'jutting frieze,

buttress, nor coigne of 'vantage,' for the imagination to take hold of. It was a plain marble slab, inscribed in plain legible characters, without either hieroglyphics or carving. There was the same directness and manly simplicity in every thing that he did. The whole of his character may indeed be summed up in two words—strength and simplicity. Fox was in the class of common men, but he was the first in that class. . . .

[Fox] was the attentive observer who watches the various effects and successive movements of a machine already constructed, and can tell how to manage it while it goes on as it has always done ; but who knows little or nothing of the principles on which it is constructed, nor how to set it right, if it becomes disordered, except by the most common and obvious expedients. Burke was to Fox what the geometrician is to the mechanic. Much has been said of the ' prophetic mind ' of Mr. Fox. The same epithet has been applied to Mr. Burke, till it has become proverbial. It has, I think, been applied without much reason to either. Fox wanted the scientific part, Burke wanted the practical. Fox had too little imagination, Burke had too much : that is, he was careless of facts, and was led away by his passions to look at one side of a question only. He had not that fine sensibility to outward impressions, that nice *tact* of circumstances, which is necessary to the consummate politician. Indeed, his wisdom was more that of the legislator than of the active statesman. They both tried their strength in the Ulysses' bow of politicians, the French Revolution : and they were both foiled. Fox indeed foretold the success of the French in combating with foreign powers. But this was no more than what every friend of the liberty of France foresaw or foretold as well as he. All those on the same side of the question were inspired with the same sagacity on the subject. Burke, on the other hand, seems to have been before-hand with the public in foreboding the internal disorders that would attend the Revolution, and its ultimate failure ; but then

it is at least a question whether he did not make good his own predictions: and certainly he saw into the causes and connexion of events much more clearly after they had happened than before. He was however undoubtedly a profound commentator on that apocalyptical chapter in the history of human nature, which I do not think Fox was. . . .

In logic Fox was inferior to Pitt—indeed, in all the formalities of eloquence, in which the latter excelled as much as he was deficient in the soul or substance. When I say that Pitt was superior to Fox in logic, I mean that he excelled him in the formal division of the subject, in always keeping it in view, as far as he chose; in being able to detect any deviation from it in others; in the management of his general topics; in being aware of the mood and figure in which the argument must move, with all its nonessentials, dilemmas, and alternatives; in never committing himself, nor ever suffering his antagonist to occupy an inch of the plainest ground, but under cover of a syllogism. He had more of ‘the dazzling fence of argument,’ as it has been called. He was, in short, better at his weapon. But then, unfortunately, it was only a dagger of lath that the wind could turn aside; whereas Fox wore a good trusty blade, of solid metal, and real execution.

## II. A SONG IN PRAISE OF PITT

*Pitt was Prime Minister from 1783 to 1801, during nearly half of which period we were at war with France; he resigned in March 1801, and did not resume office till May 1804. These popular verses, written in the year of peace, 1802, by George Canning, the wit and statesman, were recited at a dinner on Pitt's birthday, May 28, 1802.*

IF hush'd the loud whirlwind that ruffled the deep,  
 The sky, if no longer dark tempests deform;  
 When our perils are past, shall our gratitude sleep?  
 No!—Here's to the Pilot that weather'd the storm! . . .

And shall not His memory to Britain be dear,  
 Whose example with envy all nations behold ;  
 A Statesman unbiass'd by int'rest or fear,  
 By pow'r uncorrupted, untainted by gold ?

Who, when terror and doubt thro' the universe reign'd,  
 While rapine and treason their standards unfurl'd, 10  
 The heart and the hopes of his Country maintain'd,  
 And one kingdom preserv'd midst the wreck of the  
 world. . . .

Lo ! PITT, when the course of thy greatness is o'er,  
 Thy talents, thy virtues, we fondly recall !  
 Now justly we prize thee, when lost we deplore ;  
 Admir'd in thy zenith, but lov'd in thy fall !

O ! take, then—for dangers by wisdom repell'd,  
 For evils, by courage and constancy brav'd—  
 O take ! for a throne by thy counsels upheld,  
 The thanks of a people thy firmness has sav'd ! 20

And O ! if again the rude whirlwind should rise !  
 The dawning of Peace should fresh darkness deform,  
 The regrets of the good, and the fears of the wise,  
 Shall turn to the Pilot that weather'd the storm !

### III. SOME PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF FOX

*Rogers, the 'banker-poet', who died in 1855, aged 92, had been intimate with Fox, Lord Holland, and other leaders of the Whig party at the end of the eighteenth century. His Table-Talk was edited by Dyce in 1856.*

It is quite true, as stated in several accounts of him, that Fox, when a very young man, was a prodigious dandy—wearing a little odd French hat, shoes with red heels, &c. He and Lord Carlisle once travelled from Paris to Lyons for the express purpose of buying waistcoats ; and during the whole journey they talked about nothing else.

Fox (in his earlier days, I mean), Sheridan, Fitzpatrick, &c., led *such* a life ! Lord Tankerville assured me that



he has played cards with Fitzpatrick at Brookes's from ten o'clock at night till near six o'clock the next afternoon, a waiter standing by to tell them 'whose deal it was,' they being too sleepy to know.

After losing large sums at hazard, Fox would go home—not to destroy himself, as his friends sometimes feared, but—to sit down quietly, and read Greek.

He once won about eight thousand pounds; and one of his bond-creditors, who soon heard of his good luck, presented himself, and asked for payment. 'Impossible, sir,' replied Fox; 'I must first discharge my debts of honour.' The bond-creditor remonstrated. 'Well, sir, give me your bond.' It was delivered to Fox, who tore it in pieces and threw them into the fire. 'Now, sir,' said Fox, 'my debt to you is a debt of honour'; and immediately paid him.

When I became acquainted with Fox, he had given up that kind of life entirely, and resided in the most perfect sobriety and regularity at St. Anne's Hill. There he was very happy, delighting in study, in rural occupations and rural prospects. He would break from a criticism on Porson's 'Euripides' to look for the little pigs. I remember his calling out to the Chertsey hills, when a thick mist, which had for some time concealed them, rolled away: 'Good morning to you! I am glad to see you again.' There was a walk in his grounds which led to a lane through which the farmers used to pass; and he would stop them, and talk to them, with great interest, about the price of turnips, &c. I was one day with him in the Louvre, when he suddenly turned from the pictures, and, looking out at the window, exclaimed, 'This hot sun will burn up my turnips at St. Anne's Hill.' . . .

Never in my life did I hear anything equal to Fox's *speeches in reply*—they were wonderful. Burke did not do himself justice as a speaker: his manner was hurried, and he always seemed to be in a passion. Pitt's voice sounded as if he had worsted in his mouth.

Porson said that 'Pitt carefully considered his sentences before he uttered them; but that Fox threw himself into the middle of his, and left it to God Almighty to get him out again.' . . .

Lady Holland announced the death of Fox in her own odd manner to those relatives and intimate friends of his who were sitting in a room near his bed-chamber, and waiting to hear that he had breathed his last;—she walked through the room with her apron thrown over her head.

How fondly the surviving friends of Fox cherished his memory! Many years after his death, I was at a fête given by the Duke of Devonshire at Chiswick House. Sir Robert Adair and I wandered about the apartments, up and down stairs. 'In which room did Fox expire?' asked Adair. I replied, 'In this very room.' Immediately Adair burst into tears with a vehemence of grief such as I hardly ever saw exhibited by a man.

#### IV. REPRESENTATION IN THE 'UNREFORMED' PARLIAMENT

*From Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy (1785), by William Paley; a candid statement of orthodox Tory views on representative government.*

THERE is nothing in the British constitution so remarkable, as the irregularity of the popular representation. The House of Commons consists of five hundred and fifty-eight members, of whom two hundred are elected by seven thousand constituents; so that a majority of these seven thousand, without any reasonable title to superior weight or influence in the state, may, under certain circumstances, decide a question against the opinion of as many millions. Or, to place the same object in another point of view: If my estate be situated in one county of the kingdom, I possess the ten-thousandth part of a single representative; if in another, the thousandth; if in a particular district, I may be one in twenty who choose

two representatives ; if in a still more favoured spot, I may enjoy the right of appointing two myself. If I have been born, or dwell, or have served an apprenticeship, in one town, I am represented in the national assembly by two deputies, in the choice of whom I exercise an actual and sensible share of power ; if accident has thrown my birth, or habitation, or service, into another town, I have no representative at all, nor more power or concern in the election of those who make the laws by which I am governed, than if I was a subject of the Grand Seignior :—and this partiality subsists without any pretence whatever of merit or of propriety, to justify the preference of one place to another. Or, thirdly, to describe the state of national representation as it exists in reality, it may be affirmed, I believe, with truth, that about one half of the House of Commons obtain their seats in that assembly by the election of the people, the other half by purchase, or by the nomination of single proprietors of great estates.

This is a flagrant incongruity in the constitution ; but it is one of those objections which strike most forcibly at first sight. The effect of all reasoning upon the subject is, to diminish the first impression ; on which account it deserves the more attentive examination, that we may be assured, before we adventure upon a reformation, that the magnitude of the evil justifies the danger of the experiment. . . . We waive a controversy with those writers who insist upon representation as a *natural* right : we consider it so far only as a right at all, as it conduces to public utility ; that is, as it contributes to the establishment of good laws, or as it secures to the people the just administration of these laws. These effects depend upon the disposition and abilities of the national counsellors. Wherefore, if men the most likely by their qualifications to know and to promote the public interest, be actually returned to parliament, it signifies little who return them. If the properest persons be elected, what matters it by whom they are elected ? At least, no

prudent statesman would subvert long-established or even settled rules of representation, without a prospect of procuring wiser or better representatives. This then being well observed, let us, before we seek to obtain any thing more, consider duly what we already have. We *have* a House of Commons composed of five hundred and fifty-eight members, in which number are found the most considerable landholders and merchants of the kingdom ; the heads of the army, the navy, and the law ; the occupiers of great offices in the state ; together with many private individuals, eminent by their knowledge, eloquence, or activity. Now if the country be not safe in such hands, in whose may it confide its interests ? If such a number of such men be liable to the influence of corrupt motives, what assembly of men will be secure from the same danger ? Does any new scheme of representation promise to collect together more wisdom, or to produce firmer integrity ? In this view of the subject, and attending not to ideas of order and proportion (of which many minds are much enamoured) but to effects alone, we may discover just excuses for those parts of the present representation which appear to a hasty observer most exceptionable and absurd.

## V. A DIATRIBE AGAINST ' ROTTEN BOROUGHs '

*A passage from Rural Rides (1830) characteristic of William Cobbett in its vividness and political fury. The most influential popular agitator of the period, Cobbett did much to bring about the reform of parliamentary representation.*

Marlborough, Nov. 6, 1821. I left Uphusband this morning at 9, and came across to this place (20 miles) in a post-chaise. . . . I never before saw *country* people, and reapers too, observe, so miserable in appearance as these. There were some very pretty girls, but ragged as colts and as pale as ashes. The day was cold too, and frost hardly off the ground ; and their blue arms and lips would have made any heart ache but that of a seat-seller or a

loan-jobber. A little after passing by these poor things, whom I left, cursing, as I went, those who had brought them to this state, I came to a group of shabby houses upon a hill. While the boy was watering his horses, I asked the ostler the *name* of the place; and, as the old women say, 'you might have knocked me down with a feather,' when he said, '*Great Bedwin.*' The whole of the houses are not intrinsically worth a thousand pounds. There stood a thing out in the middle of the place, about 25 feet long and 15 wide, being a room stuck up on unhewn stone pillars about 10 feet high. It was the Town Hall, where the ceremony of choosing the *two Members* is performed. 'This place sends Members to parliament, don't it?' said I to the ostler. 'Yes, Sir.' 'Who are Members now?' 'I *don't know*, indeed, Sir.'—I have not read the *Henriade* of Voltaire for these 30 years; but, in ruminating upon the ostler's answer; and in thinking how the world, yes, *the whole world*, has been deceived as to this matter, two lines of that poem came across my memory:

Représentans du peuple, les Grands et le Roi :  
Spectacle magnifique ! Source sacrée des lois ! <sup>1</sup>

The Frenchman, for want of understanding the THING as well as I do, left the eulogium incomplete. I therefore here add four lines, which I request those who publish future editions of the *Henriade* to insert in continuation of the above eulogium of Voltaire:

Représentans du peuple, que celui-ci ignore,  
Sont fait à miracle pour garder son Or !  
Peuple trop heureux, que le bonheur inonde !  
L'envie de vos voisins, admiré du monde ! <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I will not swear to the very *words*; but this is the meaning of Voltaire: 'Representatives of the people, the Lords and the King: *Magnificent* spectacle! *Sacred* source of the Laws!'

<sup>2</sup> 'Representatives of the people, of whom the people know nothing, must be miraculously well calculated to have the care of their money! Oh! People too happy! overwhelmed with blessings! The *envy* of *your* neighbours, and *admired* by the *whole world*!'



The first line was suggested by the ostler ; the last by the words which we so very often hear from the bar, the bench, the *seats*, the pulpit, and the throne. Doubtless my poetry is not equal to that of Voltaire ; but, my rhyme is as good as his, and my *reason* is a great deal better.

## VI. AN ELECTION FOR A ' ROTTEN BOROUGH '

*This satirical account of a fictitious election (from T. L. Peacock's novel Melincourt, 1817), delightfully extravagant as it is, has a definite relation with historical fact. It should be compared with the serious arguments from Paley given above.*

THE large and populous city of Novote was situated at a short distance from the ancient and honourable borough of Onevote. The city contained fifty thousand inhabitants, and had no representative in the Honourable House, the deficiency being virtually supplied by the two members for Onevote ; who, having no affairs to attend to for the borough, or rather the burgess, that did return them, were supposed to have more leisure for those of the city which did not : a system somewhat analogous to that which the learned author of *Hermes* calls *a method of supply by negation*. . . .

The day of election arrived. Mr. Sarcastic's rumoured preparations, and the excellence of the ale which he had broached in the city of Novote, had given a degree of *éclat* to the election for the borough of Onevote which it had never before possessed ; the representatives usually sliding into their nomination with the same silence and decorum with which a solitary spinster slides into her pew at Wednesday's or Friday's prayers in a country church. The resemblance holds good also in this respect, that as the curate addresses the solitary maiden with the appellation of *dearly beloved brethren*, so the representatives always pluralized their solitary elector, by conferring on him the appellation of *a respectable body of constituents*.

Mr. Sarcastic, however, being determined to amuse himself at the expense of this most ' venerable feature ' in our old constitution, as Lord C[astlereagh] calls a rotten



borough, had brought Mr. Christopher Corporate into his views by the adhibition of *persuasion in a tangible shape*. It was generally known in Novote that something would be going forward in Onevote, though nobody could tell precisely what, except that a long train of brewer's drays had left the city for the borough, in grand procession, on the preceding day, under the escort of a sworn band of special constables, who were to keep guard over the ale all night. This detachment was soon followed by another, under a similar escort, and with similar injunctions; and it was understood that this second expedition of *frothy rhetoric* was sent forth under the auspices of Sir Oran Haut-ton, Baronet, the brother candidate of Simon Sarcastic, Esquire, for the representation of the ancient and honourable borough.

The borough of Onevote stood in the middle of a heath, and consisted of a solitary farm, of which the land was so poor and untractable, that it would not have been worth the while of any human being to cultivate it, had not the Duke of Rottenburgh found it very well worth his to pay his tenant for living there, to keep the honourable borough in existence. . . .

The heath had very much the appearance of a race-ground; with booths and stalls, the voices of pie-men and apple-women, the grinding of barrel organs, the scraping of fiddles, the squeaking of ballad-singers, the chirping of corkscrews, the vociferations of ale-drinkers, the cries of the 'last dying speeches of desperate malefactors,' and of 'The History and Antiquities of the honourable Borough of Onevote, a full and circumstantial account, all in half a sheet, for the price of one halfpenny!'

The hustings were erected in proper form, and immediately opposite to them was an enormous marquee with a small opening in front, in which was seated the important person of Mr. Christopher Corporate, with a tankard of ale and a pipe. . . .

Mr. Sarcastic stepped forward amidst the shouts of the assembled crowd, and addressed Mr. Christopher Corporate :

'Free, fat, and dependent burgess of this ancient and honourable borough! I stand forward an unworthy candidate, to be the representative of so important a personage, who comprises in himself a three-hundredth part of the whole elective capacity of this extensive empire. For if the whole population be estimated at eleven millions, with what awe and veneration must I look on one who is, as it were, the abstract and quintessence of thirty-three thousand six hundred and sixty-six people! The voice of Stentor was like the voice of fifty, and the voice of Harry Gill<sup>1</sup> was like the voice of three; but what are these to the voice of Mr. Christopher Corporate, which gives utterance in one breath to the concentrated power of thirty-three thousand six hundred and sixty-six voices? Of such an one it may indeed be said, that *he is himself an host*, and that *none but himself can be his parallel*.

'Most potent, grave, and reverent signor! it is usual on these occasions to make a great vapouring about honour and conscience; but as those words are now generally acknowledged to be utterly destitute of meaning, I have too much respect for your understanding to say anything about them. The *monied interest*, Mr. Corporate, for which you are as illustrious *as the sun at noonday*, is the great point of connexion and sympathy between us; and no circumstances can throw a *wet blanket* on the ardour of our reciprocal esteem, while the *fundamental feature* of our mutual interests presents itself to us in so *tangible a shape*.<sup>2</sup> How high a value I set upon your voice, you may judge by the price I have paid for half of it; which, indeed, deeply lodged as my feelings are in my pocket, I yet see no reason to regret, since you will thus confer on mine a transmutable and marketable value which I trust by proper management will leave me no loser by the bargain.'

<sup>1</sup> See Mr. Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads* ['Goody Blake and Harry Gill,' line 20].

<sup>2</sup> The figures of speech marked in italics are familiar to the admirers of parliamentary rhetoric.

‘Huzza!’ said Mr. Corporate.

‘People of the city of Novote!’ proceeded Mr. Sarcastic, ‘some of you, I am informed, consider yourselves aggrieved, that while your large and populous city has no share whatever in the formation of the Honourable House, the *plural unity* of Mr. Christopher Corporate should be invested with the privilege of double representation. But, gentlemen, representation is of two kinds, actual and virtual; an important distinction, and of great political consequence.

‘The Honourable Baronet and myself, being the actual representatives of the fat burgess of Onevote, shall be the virtual representatives of the worthy citizens of Novote; and you may rely on it, gentlemen (*with his hand on his heart*), we shall always be deeply attentive to your interests, when they happen, as no doubt they sometimes will, to be perfectly compatible with our own. . . .

‘Gentlemen, as long as a *full Gazette* is pleasant to the *quid-nunc*; as long as an empty purse is delightful to the spendthrift; as long as the cry of *Question* is a satisfactory *answer* to an argument, and to outvote reason is to refute it; as long as the way to pay old debts is to incur new ones of five times the amount; as long as the grand recipes of political health and longevity are *bleeding* and *hot water*—so long must you rejoice in the privileges of Mr. Christopher Corporate, so long must you acknowledge from the very bottom of your pockets the benefits and blessings of *virtual representation*.’

This harangue was received with great applause, acclamations rent the air, and ale flowed in torrents. Mr. Forester declined speaking, and the party on the hustings proceeded to business. Sir Oran Haut-ton, Baronet, and Simon Sarcastic, Esquire, were nominated in form. Mr. Christopher Corporate held up both his hands, with his tankard in one, and his pipe in the other; and neither poll nor scrutiny being demanded, the two candidates were pronounced duly elected as representatives of the ancient and honourable borough of Onevote.

## VII. 'THE JACOBIN BILL'

*A satirical ballad (from Blackwood's Magazine, April 1831) on the Tory side, occasioned by the first reading of the Parliamentary Reform Bill, which was moved by Lord John Russell (a member of Earl Grey's Whig ministry) on March 1, 1831. 'Hunt' is Henry Hunt, the hero of 'Peterloo' in 1819. The last stanza alludes both to the French Revolution of 1789 and to the anti-Bourbon disturbances during 1830.*

Now the reign of the tyrant for ever is past,  
 And the day-star of freedom is beaming on high—  
 When truth is now heard in the Senate at last,  
 And the shout of the million in grateful reply—  
     Let us sing and rejoice,  
     With heart and with voice,  
 And each man his bumper triumphantly fill—  
     For in this Age of Reason,  
     We know of no treason,  
 But refusing to drink to the Jacobin Bill ! 10

For many a hopeless and heart-breaking day,  
 The conflict unequal we strove to maintain—  
 But still, as the slaves of 'legitimate' sway,  
 We demanded redress—but demanded in vain—  
     Debased and degraded—  
     Our birthrights invaded—  
 We fruitlessly sought the great truth to instil,  
     That our ruthless oppressor,  
     The present possessor,  
 Must taste all the sweets of a Jacobin Bill ! 20

But the debt of the people, so long in arrear,  
 By the Jacobin Bill will be speedily paid,—  
 And the step of the peasant will press on the peer,  
 And prove of what metal his 'order' is made—  
     With Hunt at the steerage,  
     We'll pitch the whole Peerage,

Like the Prophet of old, the vex'd waters to still,—

And many a martyr

Of star and of garter,

Must now read his fate in the Jacobin Bill! . . . 30

The mechanic who toils for his shilling a-day,

May then get as drunk as the prince or the peer,—

And citizen Russell, and citizen Grey,

Will see the true use of their thousands a-year ;

In Whig and in Tory-house,

Happy and glorious,

Day after day the parched people may swill—

And how pleasant to revel

On ' the fat Bedford level,'

For love of our friend of the Jacobin Bill! . . . 40

And when every man's hand is at every man's throat—

Oh! then what a pleasant Parisian scene!

With our own *ça ira*, and our own *sans culottes*,

And perhaps, Heaven bless us! our own *guillotine*.

We've been too slow in learning—

Too dull in discerning,

These radical cures for each deep-seated ill—

But truly our neighbour

Has not lost her labour,

When at length she has taught us our Jacobin Bill! 50

## VIII. THE REFORM BILL: A SCENE IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

*From a letter dated March 30, 1831, in which Macaulay, who was an ardent supporter of the Bill, describes the division on the second reading.*

SUCH a scene as the division of last Tuesday I never saw, and never expect to see again. If I should live fifty years, the impression of it will be as fresh and sharp in my mind as if it had just taken place. It was like seeing Cæsar stabbed in the Senate House, or seeing Oliver taking the

mace from the table ; a sight to be seen only once, and never to be forgotten. The crowd overflowed the House in every part. When the strangers were cleared out, and the doors locked, we had six hundred and eight members present,—more by fifty-five than ever were in a division before. The Ayes and Noes were like two volleys of cannon from opposite sides of a field of battle. When the opposition went out into the lobby, an operation which took up twenty minutes or more, we spread ourselves over the benches on both sides of the House : for there were many of us who had not been able to find a seat during the evening. When the doors were shut we began to speculate on our numbers. Everybody was desponding. ‘We have lost it. We are only two hundred and eighty at most. I do not think we are two hundred and fifty. They are three hundred. Alderman Thompson has counted them. He says they are two hundred and ninety-nine.’ This was the talk on our benches. I wonder that men who have been long in Parliament do not acquire a better coup d’œil for numbers. The House, when only the Ayes were in it, looked to me a very fair House,—much fuller than it generally is even on debates of considerable interest. I had no hope, however, of three hundred. As the tellers passed along our lowest row on the left hand side the interest was insupportable,—two hundred and ninety-one,—two hundred and ninety-two—we were all standing up and stretching forward, telling with the tellers. At three hundred there was a short cry of joy,—at three hundred and two another,—suppressed however in a moment : for we did not yet know what the hostile force might be. We knew, however, that we could not be severely beaten. The doors were thrown open, and in they came. Each of them, as he entered, brought some different report of their numbers. It must have been impossible, as you may conceive, in the lobby, crowded as they were, to form any exact estimate. First we heard that they were three hundred and three ; then that number rose to three hundred and ten ; then went



down to three hundred and seven. Alexander Barry told me that he had counted, and that they were three hundred and four. We were all breathless with anxiety, when Charles Wood, who stood near the door, jumped up on a bench and cried out, 'They are only three hundred and one.' We set up a shout that you might have heard to Charing Cross, waving our hats, stamping against the floor, and clapping our hands. The tellers scarcely got through the crowd: for the House was thronged up to the table, and all the floor was fluctuating with heads like the pit of a theatre. But you might have heard a pin drop as Duncannon read the numbers. Then again the shouts broke out, and many of us shed tears. I could scarcely refrain. And the jaw of Peel fell; and the face of Twiss was as the face of a damned soul; and Herries looked like Judas taking his necktie off for the last operation. We shook hands, and clapped each other on the back, and went out laughing, crying, and huzzaing into the lobby. And no sooner were the outer doors opened than another shout answered that within the House. All the passages, and the stairs into the waiting-rooms, were thronged by people who had waited till four in the morning to know the issue. We passed through a narrow lane between two thick masses of them; and all the way down they were shouting and waving their hats, till we got into the open air. I called a cabriolet, and the first thing the driver asked was, 'Is the Bill carried?' 'Yes, by one.' 'Thank God for it, Sir.' And away I rode to Gray's Inn,—and so ended a scene which will probably never be equalled till the reformed Parliament wants reforming.

## IX. A SPEECH ON THE HOUSE OF LORDS AND THE REFORM BILL

*Finally carried in the Commons on Sept. 22, 1831, the Bill was rejected by the Lords on Oct. 8, and Parliament was prorogued amidst great popular excitement and resentment against the Lords. During October, the Rev. Sydney Smith delivered at Taunton the witty speech from which this passage is taken.*

I FEEL most deeply the event which has taken place, because, by putting the two Houses of Parliament in collision with each other, it will impede the public business, and diminish the public prosperity. I feel it as a churchman, because I cannot but blush to see so many dignitaries of the church arrayed against the wishes and happiness of the people. I feel it more than all, because I believe it will sow the seeds of deadly hatred between the aristocracy and the great mass of the people. The loss of the bill I do not feel, and for the best of all possible reasons—because I have not the slightest idea that it is lost. I have no more doubt, before the expiration of the winter, that this bill will pass, than I have that the annual tax bills will pass, and greater certainty than this no man can have, for Franklin tells us, there are but two things certain in this world—death and taxes. As for the possibility of the House of Lords preventing ere long a reform of Parliament, I hold it to be the most absurd notion that ever entered into human imagination. I do not mean to be disrespectful, but the attempt of the Lords to stop the progress of reform, reminds me very forcibly of the great storm of Sidmouth, and of the conduct of the excellent Mrs. Partington on that occasion. In the winter of 1824, there set in a great flood upon that town—the tide rose to an incredible height—the waves rushed in upon the houses, and every thing was threatened with destruction. In the midst of this sublime and terrible storm, Dame Partington, who lived upon the beach, was seen at the door of her house with mop and pattens, trundling her mop, squeezing out the sea-water, and vigorously pushing away the Atlantic Ocean. The Atlantic was roused. Mrs. Partington's spirit was up; but I need not tell you that the contest was unequal. The Atlantic Ocean beat Mrs. Partington. She was excellent at a slop, or a puddle, but she should not have meddled with a tempest. Gentlemen, be at your ease—be quiet and steady. You will beat Mrs. Partington.

## X. THE TRIUMPH OF REFORM

*The final struggle over Reform lasted from December 1831 to June 1832. Under a threat of the creation of new peers, the Lords at length, on June 4, 1832, allowed the Bill to pass. This 'Hymn' by Ebenezer Elliott, 'written for the Rotherham Political Union', expresses the jubilation among the artisan class in the great industrial centres.*

WE thank Thee, Lord of earth and heav'n,  
For hope, and strength, and triumph given!  
We thank Thee that the fight is won,  
Although our work is but begun.

We met, we crush'd the evil powers;  
A nobler task must now be ours—  
Their victims maim'd and poor to feed,  
And bind the bruised and broken reed.

Oh, let not Ruin's will be done,  
When Freedom's fight is fought and won!      10  
The deed of Brougham, Russell, Grey,  
Outlives the night! Lord, give us day!

Grant time, grant patience, to renew,  
What England's foes and thine o'erthrew;—  
If they destroy'd, let us restore,  
And say to misery, mourn no more.

Lord, let the human storm be still'd!  
Lord, let the million mouths be fill'd!  
Let labour cease to toil in vain!  
Let England be herself again! . . .      20

Sing, Britons, sing! The sound shall go  
Wherever Freedom finds a foe;  
This day a trumpet's voice is blown  
O'er every despot's heart and throne.

## XI. THE REFORMED PARLIAMENT: A SOBER SURVEY

*A review (from the Journal of Charles C. F. Greville, Clerk to the Council) of the first year's activities of the reformed Parliament, from the point of view of a moderate and unenthusiastic Conservative who had disapproved of the changes in representation.*

September 3, 1833. The Parliament is up, and not before people were dead sick of it, and had dropped out of town one by one till hardly any Parliament was left. It may be worth while to take a little survey of the present condition of things as compared with what it was a few months ago, and consider at this resting time what has been the practical effect of the great measure of Reform, without going very deeply into the question. The Reform Bill was carried *in toto*, the Tories having contrived that everything that was attempted should be gained by the Reformers. No excuse, therefore, was left for the Parliament, and if 'the people' did not choose a good one it was their own fault. It was chosen, and when it met was found to be composed of a majority of supporters of the present [Whig] Government, a certain number of Tories, not enough to be powerful, and many Radicals, who soon proved to be wholly inefficient. It speedily became manifest that in point of ability it was not only inferior to the last, but perhaps to any Parliament that has sat for many years. There were 350 new members (or some such number), but not one man among them of shining or remarkable talent; Cobbett, Silk Buckingham, Roebuck, and such men soon found their level and sunk into insignificance. . . . The measures have generally evinced a Conservative character, and the Parliament has not shown any disposition to favour subversive principles or to encourage subversive language. . . . Notwithstanding apprehensions and predictions the Government has contrived to carry on the business of the country very successfully, and great reforms have been accomplished in every department of the state, which do not

seem liable to any serious objections ; and in the midst of many troubles, of much complaining and bickering, the country has been advancing in prosperity, and recovering rapidly from the state of sickly depression in which it lay at the end of last year. It is fair to compare the state of affairs now and then, merely reciting facts, and let the praise rest where it may, whether it be due to the wisdom of men or the result of that disposition to right itself which has always appeared inherent in the British commonwealth. Some months ago there appeared every prospect of a war in Europe ; the French were in Belgium, whence many predicted they would never be got away ; Ireland was in a flame, every post brought the relation of fresh horrors and atrocities ; in England trade was low, alarm and uncertainty prevalent, and a general disquietude pervaded the nation, some fearing and others desiring change, some expecting, others dreading the great things which a Reformed Parliament would do. The session is over, and a Reformed Parliament turns out to be very much like every other Parliament, except that it is rather differently and somewhat less ably composed than its predecessors. The hopes and the fears of mankind have been equally disappointed, and after all the clamour, confusion, riots, conflagrations, furies, despair, and triumphs through which we have arrived at this consummation, up to the present time, at least, matters remain pretty much as they were, except that the Whigs have got possession of the power which the Tories have lost.

## SECTION FIVE

### RELIGION: THE CHURCH: DISSENT

#### I. AN ENGLISH CATHEDRAL SQUARE ON A SUNDAY EVENING

*Of the short fragment, The Eve of Saint Mark, from which these lines are taken, Keats wrote from Winchester in September 1819: 'I think it will give you the sensation of walking about an old country town in a coolish evening.'*

UPON a Sabbath-day it fell;  
Twice holy was the Sabbath-bell,  
That call'd the folk to evening prayer;  
The city streets were clean and fair  
From wholesome drench of April rains;  
And, on the western window panes,  
The chilly sunset faintly told  
Of unmatur'd green vallies cold,  
Of the green thorny bloomless hedge, 10  
Of rivers new with spring-tide sedge,  
Of primroses by shelter'd rills,  
And daisies on the aguish hills.  
Twice holy was the Sabbath-bell:  
The silent streets were crowded well  
With staid and pious companies,  
Warm from their fire-side orat'ries;  
And moving, with demurest air,  
To even-song, and vesper prayer.  
Each arched porch, and entry low,  
Was fill'd with patient folk and slow, 20  
With whispers hush, and shuffling feet,  
While play'd the organ loud and sweet. . . .



Bertha was a maiden fair,  
 Dwelling in th'old Minster-square ;  
 From her fire-side she could see,  
 Sidelong, its rich antiquity,  
 Far as the Bishop's garden-wall ;  
 Where sycamores and elm-trees tall,  
 Full-leav'd, the forest had outstript,  
 By no sharp north-wind ever nipt, 30  
 So shelter'd by the mighty pile.  
 Bertha arose, and read awhile,  
 With forehead 'gainst the window-pane.  
 Again she try'd, and then again,  
 Until the dusk eve left her dark  
 Upon the legend of St. Mark.  
 From plaited lawn-frill, fine and thin,  
 She lifted up her soft warm chin,  
 With aching neck and swimming eyes,  
 And daz'd with saintly imageries. 40

All was gloom, and silent all,  
 Save now and then the still foot-fall  
 Of one returning homewards late,  
 Past the echoing minster-gate.  
 The clamorous daws, that all the day  
 Above tree-tops and towers play,  
 Pair by pair had gone to rest,  
 Each in its ancient belfry-nest,  
 Where asleep they fall betimes,  
 To music of the drowsy chimes. 50

## II. A DEFENCE OF THE CHURCH ESTABLISHMENT

*From Burke's Reflections on the Revolution in France (1790).*

HE who gave our nature to be perfected by our virtue, willed also the necessary means of its perfection. He willed therefore the state ; He willed its connexion with the source and original archetype of all perfection. They who are

convinced of this his will, which is the law of laws and the sovereign of sovereigns, cannot think it reprehensible, that this our corporate fealty and homage, that this our recognition of a seigniorie paramount, I had almost said this oblation of the state itself, as a worthy offering on the high altar of universal praise, should be performed, as all publick solemn acts are performed, in buildings, in musick, in decoration, in speech, in the dignity of persons, according to the customs of mankind, taught by their nature ; that is, with modest splendour, with unassuming state, with mild majesty and sober pomp. For those purposes they think some part of the wealth of the country is as usefully employed, as it can be in fomenting the luxury of individuals. It is the publick ornament. It is the publick consolation. It nourishes the publick hope. The poorest man finds his own importance and dignity in it, whilst the wealth and pride of individuals at every moment makes the man of humble rank and fortune sensible of his inferiority, and degrades and vilifies his condition. It is for the man in humble life, and to raise his nature, and to put him in mind of a state in which the privileges of opulence will cease, when he will be equal by nature, and may be more than equal by virtue—that this portion of the general wealth of his country is employed and sanctified. . . .

It is on some such principles that the majority of the people of England, far from thinking a religious national establishment unlawful, hardly think it lawful to be without one. . . . They do not consider their church establishment as convenient, but as essential to their state ; not as a thing heterogeneous and separable ; something added for accommodation ; what they may either keep up or lay aside, according to their temporary ideas of convenience. They consider it as the foundation of their whole constitution, with which, and with every part of which, it holds an indissoluble union. Church and state are ideas inseparable in their minds, and scarcely is the one ever mentioned without mentioning the other.

## III. THE OLD-FASHIONED VICAR

*From a set of Every-Day Characters, by W. M. Praed (1829).*

His talk was like a stream, which runs  
 With rapid change from rocks to roses :  
 It slipped from politics to puns,  
 It passed from Mahomet to Moses ;  
 Beginning with the laws which keep  
 The planets in their radiant courses,  
 And ending with some precept deep  
 For dressing eels, or shoeing horses.

He was a shrewd and sound Divine,  
 Of loud Dissent the mortal terror ; 10  
 And when, by dint of page and line,  
 He 'stablished Truth, or startled Error,  
 The Baptist found him far too deep ;  
 The Deist sighed with saving sorrow ;  
 And the lean Levite went to sleep,  
 And dreamed of tasting pork to-morrow.

His sermon never said or showed  
 That Earth is foul, that Heaven is gracious,  
 Without refreshment on the road  
 From Jerome, or from Athanasius : 20  
 And sure a righteous zeal inspired  
 The hand and head that penned and planned them,  
 For all who understood admired,  
 And some who did not understand them.

He wrote, too, in a quiet way,  
 Small treatises, and smaller verses,  
 And sage remarks on chalk and clay,  
 And hints to noble Lords—and nurses ;  
 True histories of last year's ghost,  
 Lines to a ringlet, or a turban, 30  
 And trifles for the *Morning Post*,  
 And nothings for Sylvanus Urban.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The pseudonym adopted by all the editors of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, the monthly miscellany which printed mostly amateur productions—unpaid of course.—[*Ed.*]

He did not think all mischief fair,  
 Although he had a knack of joking;  
 He did not make himself a bear,  
 Although he had a taste for smoking;  
 And when religious sects ran mad,  
 He held, in spite of all his learning,  
 That if a man's belief is bad,  
 It will not be improved by burning.

40

. . . . .

Where is the old man laid?—look down,  
 And construe on the slab before you,  
 ‘*Hic jacet GVLIELMVS BROWN,*  
*Vir nullâ non donandus lauru.*’

#### IV. A DEFENCE OF DISSENTERS

*From an essay ‘On Court-Influence’, in Political Essays (1819),  
 by William Hazlitt, who was brought up as a Unitarian.*

OUR sciolists would persuade us that the different sects are hot-beds of sedition, because they are nurseries of public spirit, and independence, and sincerity of opinion in all other respects. They are so necessarily, and by the supposition. They are Dissenters from the Established Church: they submit voluntarily to certain privations, they incur a certain portion of obloquy and ill-will, for the sake of what they believe to be the truth: they are not time-servers on the face of the evidence, and that is sufficient to expose them to the instinctive hatred and ready ribaldry of those who think venality the first of virtues, and prostitution of principle the best sacrifice a man can make to the Graces or his Country. The Dissenter does not change his sentiments with the seasons: he does not suit his conscience to his convenience. This is enough to condemn him for a pestilent fellow. He will not give up his principles because they are unfashionable, therefore he is not to be trusted. He speaks his mind bluntly and honestly, therefore he is a secret disturber of the peace,

a dark conspirator against the State. On the contrary, the different sects in this country are, or have been, the steadiest supporters of its liberties and laws: they are checks and barriers against the insidious or avowed encroachments of arbitrary power, as effectual and indispensable as any others in the Constitution: they are depositaries of a principle as sacred and somewhat rarer than a devotion to Court-influence—we mean the love of truth. It is hard for any one to be an honest politician who is not born and bred a Dissenter. Nothing else can sufficiently inure and steel a man against the prevailing prejudices of the world, but that habit of mind which arises from nonconformity to its decisions in matters of religion. There is a natural alliance between the love of civil and religious liberty, as much as between Church and State. Protestantism was the first school of political liberty in Europe: Presbyterianism has been one great support of it in England. The sectary in religion is taught to appeal to his own bosom for the truth and sincerity of his opinions, and to arm himself with stern indifference to what others think of them. This will no doubt often produce a certain hardness of manner and cold repulsiveness of feeling in trifling matters, but it is the only sound discipline of truth, or inflexible honesty in politics as well as in religion. The same principle of independent inquiry and unbiassed conviction which makes him reject all undue interference between his Maker and his conscience, will give a character of uprightness and disregard of personal consequences to his conduct and sentiments in what concerns the most important relations between man and man. He neither subscribes to the dogmas of priests, nor truckles to the mandates of Ministers. He has a rigid sense of duty which renders him superior to the caprice, the prejudices, and the injustice of the world.

## V. METHODIST PREACHING AND A ' LOVE-FEAST '

*Methodism, the most vital religious movement of modern times, was founded by John Wesley in the 1730's. It must of course be distinguished from the older nonconformist groups, though it had points of contact with Quakerism. This is a typical extract from Wesley's Journal, which is pervaded by the religious ' enthusiasm ' in which he and his followers gloried, though it was regarded with suspicion or aversion by orthodox Churchmen. Wesley died in 1791.*

March 29, 1787. Here we entered into the country [Staffordshire], which seems to be all on fire, that which borders on Burslem on every side ; preachers and people provoking one another to love and good works, in such a manner as was never seen before. In the evening I preached at Burslem. Observing the people flocking together, I began half an hour before the appointed time ; but notwithstanding this, the house would not contain one-half of the congregation ; so while I was preaching in the house, to all that could get in, John Broadbent preached, in a yard, to the rest. The Love-feast followed ; but such a one as I have not known for many years. While the two or three first spoke, the power of God so fell upon all that were present, some praying and others giving thanks, that their voices could scarce be heard ; and two or three were speaking at a time, till I gently advised them to speak one at a time ; and they did so, with amazing energy. Some of them had found peace a year ago ; some within a month or a week ; some within a day or two ; and one of them, a potter's boy, told us, ' At the prayer-meeting I found myself dropping into hell, and I cried to the Lord, and he showed me he loved me ; but Satan came immediately, and offered me a bag of money as long as my arm ; but I said, " Get thee behind me, Satan." ' Several also testified, that the blood of Christ had cleansed them from all sin. Two declared, after bitter cries, that they knew their sins were just then blotted out by the blood of the Lamb ; and I doubt not, but it will be found, upon inquiry, that several more were either justified, or sanctified. Indeed there has been, for some



time, such an outpouring of the Spirit here, as has not been in any other part of the kingdom, particularly in the meetings for prayer; fifteen or twenty have been justified in a day; some of them had been the most notorious, abandoned sinners in all the country.

## VI. AN ATTACK ON THE METHODISTS

*An amusing but, of course, grossly unfair account of an actual meeting, from Cobbett's Rural Rides.*

Tenterden, Kent, Sunday, 31 August, 1823. Coming [on horseback] through the village of Benenden, I heard a man at my right, talking very loud about *houses! houses! houses!* It was a Methodist parson, in a house close by the road side. I pulled up, and stood still, in the middle of the road, but looking, in silent soberness, into the window (which was open) of the room in which the preacher was at work. I believe my stopping rather disconcerted him; for he got into shocking *repetition*. 'Do you *know*,' said he, laying great stress on the word *know*: 'do you *know*, that you have ready for you houses, houses I say; I say do you know; do you know that you have houses in the heavens not made with hands? Do you know this from *experience*? Has the blessed Jesus *told you so*?' And, on he went to say, that, if Jesus had told them so, they would be saved, and that if he had not, and did not, they would be damned. Some girls whom I saw in the room, plump and rosy as could be, did not seem at all daunted by these menaces; and indeed, they appeared to me to be thinking much more about getting houses for themselves *in this world first*; just to *see a little* before they entered, or endeavoured to enter, or even thought much about, those '*houses*' of which the parson was speaking: *houses* with pig-styes and little snug gardens attached to them, together with all the other domestic and conjugal circumstances, these girls seemed to me to be preparing themselves for. The truth is, these fellows have no power on the minds of any but the miserable.

Scarcely had I proceeded a hundred yards from the place where this fellow was bawling, when I came to the very situation which he ought to have occupied, I mean the *stocks*, which the people of Benenden have, with singular humanity, fitted up with a *bench*, so that the patient, while he is receiving the benefit of the remedy, is not exposed to the danger of catching cold by sitting, as in other places, upon the ground, always damp, and sometimes actually wet. But, I would ask the people of Benenden what is the *use* of this humane precaution, and, indeed, what is the use of the stocks themselves, if, while a fellow is ranting and bawling in the manner just described, at the distance of a hundred yards from the stocks, the stocks (as is here actually the case) are almost hidden by grass and nettles? This, however, is the case all over the country; not nettles and grass indeed smothering the stocks, but, I never see any feet peeping through the holes, any where, though I find Methodist parsons every where, and though *the law compels the parishes to keep up* all the pairs of stocks that exist in all parts of them.

## VII. TONY WELLER AND THE METHODISTS

*Part of Chap. XXII in The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club, by Charles Dickens (1836-7)—a picture of Methodism famous in fiction, and as amusing and unfair as the last extract. The 'man with the red nose' is Mr. Stiggins, who makes a more prominent appearance, with the second Mrs. Weller, in a later chapter of Pickwick.*

'How's mother-in-law this mornin'?' [Sam asks his father.]

'Queer, Sammy, queer,' replied the elder Mr. Weller, with impressive gravity. 'She's been gettin' rayther in the Methodistical order lately, Sammy; and she is uncommon pious, to be sure.' . . .

'What do you think them women does t'other day,' continued Mr. Weller, after a short pause, during which he had significantly struck the side of his nose with his

forefinger some half-dozen times. 'What do you think they does, t'other day, Sammy?'

'Don't know,' replied Sam, 'what?'

'Goes and gets up a grand tea drinkin' for a feller they calls their shepherd,' said Mr. Weller. 'I was a-standing starin' in at the pictur' shop down at our place, when I sees a little bill about it; "tickets half-a-crown. All applications to be made to the committee. Secretary, Mrs. Weller"; and when I got home there was the committee a-sittin' in our back parlour. Fourteen women; I wish you could ha' heard 'em, Sammy. There they was, a-passin' resolutions, and wotin' supplies, and all sorts o' games. Well, what with your mother-in-law a-worrying me to go, and what with my looking for'ard to seein' some queer starts if I did, I put my name down for a ticket; at six o'clock on the Friday evenin' I dresses myself out wery smart, and off I goes with the old 'ooman, and up we walks into a fust-floor where there was tea-things for thirty, and a whole lot o' women as begins whisperin' to one another, and lookin' at me, as if they'd never seen a rayther stout gen'lm'n of eight-and-fifty afore. By and by, there comes a great bustle downstairs, and a lanky chap with a red nose and a white neckcloth rushes up, and sings out, "Here's the shepherd a-coming to wisit his faithful flock"; and in comes a fat chap in black, with a great white face, a-smilin' away like clockwork. Such goin's on, Sammy! "The kiss of peace," says the shepherd; and then he kissed the women all round, and ven he'd done, the man with the red nose began. I was just a-thinkin' whether I hadn't better begin too—'specially as there was a wery nice lady a-sittin' next me—ven in comes the tea, and your mother-in-law, as had been makin' the kettle bile downstairs. At it they went, tooth and nail. Such a precious loud hymn, Sammy, while the tea was a-brewing; such a grace, such eatin' and drinkin'! I wish you could ha' seen the shepherd walkin' into the ham and muffins. I never see such a chap to eat and drink—never. The red-nosed man warn't by no means

the sort of person you'd like to grub by contract, but he was nothin' to the shepherd. Well; arter the tea was over, they sang another hymn, and then the shepherd began to preach: and wery well he did it, considerin' how heavy them muffins must have lied on his chest. Presently he pulls up, all of a sudden, and hollers out, "Where is the sinner; where is the mis'erable sinner?" Upon which, all the women looked at me, and began to groan as if they was a-dying. I thought it was rather sing'ler, but hows'ever, I says nothing. Presently he pulls up again, and lookin' wery hard at me, says, "Where is the sinner; where is the mis'erable sinner?" and all the women groans again, ten times louder than afore. I got rather savage at this, so I takes a step or two for'ard and says, "My friend," says I, "did you apply that 'ere obseruation to me?" 'Stead of beggin' my pardon as any gen'lm'n would ha' done, he got more abusive than ever: called me a wessel, Sammy—a wessel of wrath—and all sorts o' names. So my blood being reg'larly up, I first gave him two or three for himself, and then two or three more to hand over to the man with the red nose, and walked off. I wish you could ha' heard how the women screamed, Sammy, ven they picked up the shepherd from underneath the table.'

## VIII. THE EVIL AND THE GOOD OF METHODISM

*From Chap. XXIX of Southey's well-known Life of Wesley (1820). Southey was a strong supporter of the Established Church, but he gives, on the whole, a just and balanced account of Methodism.*

THE tendency to produce mock humility and spiritual pride is one of the evil effects of Methodism. It is chargeable also with leading to bigotry, illiberal manners, confined knowledge, and uncharitable superstition. In its insolent language, all unawakened persons, that is to say, all except themselves, or such graduated professors in

other evangelical sects as they are pleased to admit *ad eundem*, are contemptuously styled unbelievers. Wesley could not communicate to his followers his own catholic charity; indeed, the doctrine which he held forth was not always consistent with his own better feelings. Still less was he able to impart that winning deportment, which arose in him from the benignity of his disposition, and which no Jesuit ever possessed in so consummate a degree by art, as he by nature. The circle to which he would have confined their reading was narrow enough; his own works, and his own series of abridgements, would have constituted the main part of a Methodist's library. But in this respect the zeal of the pupils exceeded that of the master, and Wesley actually gave offence by printing Prior's 'Henry and Emma' in his Magazine. . . .

It was among those classes of society whose moral and religious education had been blindly and culpably neglected, that Methodism produced an immediate beneficial effect; and, in cases of brutal depravity and habitual vice, it often produced a thorough reformation, which could not have been brought about by any less powerful agency than that of religious zeal. 'Sinners of every other sort,' said a good old clergyman, 'have I frequently known converted to God: but an habitual drunkard I have never known converted.'—'But I,' says Wesley, 'have known five hundred, perhaps five thousand.' To these moral miracles he appealed in triumph, as undeniable proofs that Methodism was an extraordinary work of God. . . . 'At this day, the Gospel leaven, faith working by love, inward and outward holiness, or (to use the terms of St. Paul) righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, hath spread in various parts of Europe, particularly in England, Scotland, Ireland, in the Islands, in the north and south from Georgia to New England and Newfoundland, that sinners have been truly converted to God, thoroughly changed both in heart and in life, not by tens, or by hundreds only, but by thousands, yea, by myriads. The fact cannot be denied: we can point out the persons,



with their names and places of abode ; and yet the wise men of the world, the men of eminence, the men of learning and renown, cannot imagine what we mean by talking of any extraordinary work of God.'

Forcible examples are to be found of this true conversion, this real regeneration ; as well as many affecting instances of the support which religion, through the means of Methodism, has given in the severest afflictions, and of the peace and contentment which it has afforded to those who without it would have been forlorn and hopeless. Many, perhaps most of these conversions, were produced by field-preaching ; and it is probable, therefore, that Methodism did more good in its earlier than in its latter days, when preaching in the open air was gradually disused, as chapels were multiplied. The two brothers, and the more zealous of their followers, used at first also to frequent Bedlam and the prisons, for the purpose of administering consolation to those who stood most in need of it. When Methodism was most unpopular, admission to these places was refused them, which occasioned Wesley to exclaim, ' So we are forbid to go to Newgate for fear of making them wicked, and to Bedlam for fear of driving them mad ! ' In both places, and in hospitals also, great good might be effected by that zeal which the Methodists possess, were it tempered with discretion. . . .

In estimating the effects of Methodism, the good which it has done indirectly must not be overlooked. As the Reformation produced a visible reform in those parts of Christendom where the Romish Church maintained its supremacy, so, though in a less degree, the progress of Wesley's disciples has been beneficial to our Establishment, exciting in many of the parochial clergy the zeal which was wanting. Where the clergy exert themselves, the growth of Methodism is checked ; and perhaps it may be said to be most useful where it is least successful. To the impulse also, which was given by Methodism, that missionary spirit may be ascribed which is now carrying



the light of the Gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth. In no way can religious zeal be so beneficially directed as in this.

## IX. IN FAVOUR OF CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION

*Until 1829 Roman Catholics, in both England and Ireland, were denied all political rights (including the tenure of any public office and the vote for Parliament), though their worst civil grievances had been remedied before 1800. Sydney Smith, wit, Anglican clergyman, and Whig politician, who was one of their doughtiest champions, published in 1807 his Letters on the Catholics, from which this passage comes, and which is often called Peter Plymley's Letters, from the pseudonym adopted by the author.*

I SOLEMNLY believe blue and red baboons to be more popular here [in England] than Catholics and Presbyterians; they are more understood, and there is a greater disposition to do something for them. When a country squire hears of an ape, his first feeling is to give it nuts and apples; when he hears of a Dissenter, his immediate impulse is to commit it to the county jail, to shave its head, to alter its customary food, and to have it privately whipped. This is no caricature, but an accurate picture of national feelings, as they degrade and endanger us at this very moment. The Irish Catholic gentleman would bear his legal disabilities with greater temper, if these were all he had to bear—if they did not enable every Protestant cheese-monger and tidewaiter to treat him with contempt. He is branded on the forehead with a red-hot iron, and treated like a spiritual felon, because, in the highest of all considerations, he is led by the noblest of all guides, his own disinterested conscience. . . .

I cannot imagine why the friends to the Church Establishment should entertain such an horror of seeing the doors of Parliament flung open to the Catholics, and view so passively the enjoyment of that right by the Presbyterians and by every other species of Dissenter. In their tenets, in their Church government, in the nature of their endowments, the Dissenters are infinitely more distant

from the Church of England than the Catholics are ; yet the Dissenters have never been excluded from Parliament. There are 45 members in one House, and 16 in the other, who are always Dissenters. There is no law which would prevent every member of the Lords and Commons from being Dissenters. The Catholics could not bring into Parliament half the number of the Scotch members ; and yet one exclusion is of such immense importance, because it has taken place ; and the other no human being thinks of, because no one is accustomed to it. I have often thought, if the *wisdom of our ancestors* had excluded all persons with red hair from the House of Commons, of the throes and convulsions it would occasion to restore them to their natural rights. What mobs and riots would it produce ? To what infinite abuse and obloquy would the capillary patriot be exposed ; what wormwood would distil from Mr. Perceval, what froth would drop from Mr. Canning ; . . . how Lord Eldon would appeal to the Deity and his own virtues, and to the hair of his children : some would say that red-haired men were superstitious ; some would prove they were atheists ; they would be petitioned against as the friends of slavery, and the advocates for revolt ; in short, such a corrupter of the heart and the understanding is the spirit of persecution, that these unfortunate people (conspired against by their fellow subjects of every complexion), if they did not emigrate to countries where hair of another colour was persecuted, would be driven to the falsehood of perukes, or the hypocrisy of the Tricosian fluid.

## X. GOD IS LOVE

*Shelley was commonly regarded during his lifetime as an atheist, and has often since been called a pantheist. His active dislike of institutional religion may be seen in the first of these passages ; but both show clearly that, if mere labels are ignored, his faith was very like Christianity with the conception of a personal God left out.—The extracts are respectively from Canto VIII of The Revolt of Islam*

(1818) and from Adonais (1821), the *elegy on the death of the poet Keats*.

## I

O LOVE, who to the hearts of wandering men  
 Art as the calm to Ocean's weary waves !  
 Justice, or Truth, or Joy ! those only can  
 From slavery and religion's labyrinth caves  
 Guide us, as one clear star the seamen saves.  
 To give to all an equal share of good,  
 To track the steps of Freedom, though through graves  
 She pass, to suffer all in patient mood,  
 To weep for crime, though stained with thy friend's dearest  
 blood,—

To feel the peace of self-contentment's lot,                    10  
 To own all sympathies, and outrage none,  
 And in the inmost bowers of sense and thought,  
 Until life's sunny day is quite gone down,  
 To sit and smile with Joy, or, not alone,  
 To kiss salt tears from the worn cheek of Woe ;  
 To live, as if to love and live were one,—  
 This is not faith or law, nor those who bow  
 To thrones on Heaven or Earth, such destiny may know.

## II

—From the world's bitter wind  
 Seek shelter in the shadow of the tomb.                    20  
 What Adonais is, why fear we to become ?

The One remains, the many change and pass ;  
 Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly ;  
 Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,  
 Stains the white radiance of Eternity,  
 Until Death tramples it to fragments.—Die,  
 If thou wouldst be with that which thou dost seek !  
 Follow where all is fled !—Rome's azure sky,  
 Flowers, ruins, statues, music, words, are weak  
 The glory they transfuse with fitting truth to speak. . . . 30

That Light whose smile kindles the Universe,  
That Beauty in which all things work and move,  
That Benediction which the eclipsing Curse  
Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love  
Which through the web of being blindly wove  
By man and beast and earth and air and sea,  
Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of  
The fire for which all thirst ; now beams on me,  
Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.

The breath whose might I have invoked in song 40  
Descends on me ; my spirit's bark is driven,  
Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng  
Whose sails were never to the tempest given ;  
The massy earth and spherèd skies are riven !  
I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar ;  
Whilst, burning through the inmost veil of Heaven,  
The soul of Adonais, like a star,  
Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are.



## SECTION SIX

# THE COUNTRYSIDE: TRAVEL: THE SEA

## I. A ROMANTIC VIEW OF THE ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE

*Washington Irving, the famous American author, wrote this passage in The Sketch-Book of Geoffrey Crayon during his second visit to England, which began in 1815. The point of view is hardly that of an alien, for Irving's parents were both British-born, and he spent nearly half of his long life in Europe.*

A GREAT part of the island is level, and would be monotonous, were it not for the charms of culture; but it is studded and gemmed, as it were, with castles and palaces, and embroidered with parks and gardens. It does not abound in grand and sublime prospects, but rather in little home scenes of rural repose and sheltered quiet. Every antique farm house and moss-grown cottage is a picture; and as the roads are continually winding, and the view is shut in by groves and hedges, the eye is delighted by a continual succession of small landscapes of captivating loveliness.

The great charm, however, of English scenery is the moral feeling that seems to pervade it. It is associated in the mind with ideas of order, of quiet, of sober well established principles, of hoary usage and reverend custom. Every thing seems to be the growth of ages of regular and peaceful existence. The old church of remote architecture, with its low massive portal; its gothic tower; its windows rich with tracery and painted glass, in scrupulous preservation; its stately monuments of warriors



and worthies of the olden time, ancestors of the present lords of the soil; its tomb stones, recording successive generations of sturdy yeomanry, whose progeny still plough the same fields, and kneel at the same altar, the parsonage, a quaint irregular pile, partly antiquated, but repaired and altered in the tastes of various ages and occupants. The stile and footpath leading from the churchyard, across pleasant fields, and along shady hedge-rows, according to an immemorial right of way. The neighbouring village, with its venerable cottages, its public green, sheltered by trees, under which the forefathers of the present race have sported. The antique family mansion, standing apart in some little rural domain, but looking down with a protecting air on the surrounding scene. All these common features of English landscape, evince a calm and settled security, an hereditary transmission of homebred virtues and local attachments, that speak deeply and touchingly for the moral character of the nation.

## II. A SOBER VIEW OF VILLAGE LIFE

*From The Parish Register, by George Crabbe (1807).—‘ Auburn ’ in line 12 alludes to Goldsmith’s romantic picture of ‘ Sweet Auburn ! loveliest village of the plain ’, in The Deserted Village (1770), to which this poem and The Village (1783) were a kind of realistic counterblast.*

Is there a place, save one the poet sees,  
A land of love, of liberty and ease ;  
Where labour wearies not, nor cares suppress  
Th' eternal flow of rustic happiness ;  
Where no proud mansion frowns in awful state,  
Or keeps the sunshine from the cottage-gate ;  
Where young and old, intent on pleasure, throng,  
And half man's life is holiday and song ?  
Vain search for scenes like these ! no view appears,  
By sighs unruffled or unstain'd by tears ;  
Since vice the world subdued and waters drown'd,  
Auburn and Eden can no more be found.

Hence good and evil mix'd, but man has skill  
 And power to part them, when he feels the will !  
 Toil, care, and patience bless th' abstemious few,  
 Fear, shame, and want the thoughtless herd pursue.

Behold the cot ! where thrives th' industrious swain,  
 Source of his pride, his pleasure, and his gain ;  
 Screen'd from the winter's wind, the sun's last ray  
 Smiles on the window and prolongs the day ; 20  
 Projecting thatch the woodbine's branches stop,  
 And turn their blossoms to the casement's top :  
 All need requires is in that cot contain'd,  
 And much that taste untaught and unrestrain'd  
 Surveys delighted ; there she loves to trace,  
 In one gay picture, all the royal race ;  
 Around the walls are heroes, lovers, kings ;  
 The print that shows them and the verse that sings. . . .

Fair scenes of peace ! ye might detain us long,  
 But vice and misery now demand the song ; 30  
 And turn our view from dwellings simply neat,  
 To this infected row, we term our street.

Here, in cabal, a disputatious crew  
 Each evening meet ; the sot, the cheat, the shrew :  
 Riots are nightly heard :—the curse, the cries  
 Of beaten wife, perverse in her replies ;  
 While shrieking children hold each threat'ning hand,  
 And sometimes life, and sometimes food demand :  
 Boys, in their first-stol'n rags, to swear begin,  
 And girls, who heed not dress, are skill'd in gin . . . 40

Between the road-way and the walls, offence  
 Invades all eyes and strikes on every sense :  
 There lie, obscene, at every open door,  
 Heaps from the hearth and sweepings from the floor,  
 And day by day the mingled masses grow,  
 As sinks are disembogued and kennels flow.

There hungry dogs from hungry children steal,  
 There pigs and chickens quarrel for a meal ;  
 There dropsied infants wail without redress,  
 And all is want and wo and wretchedness. 50

## III. THE ENCLOSURE OF COMMON LANDS

*During the eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries the Enclosure Movement—i.e., the re-allotment among private owners of lands hitherto shared among holders of common rights—went on busily. The main objects—economy and improvement in the methods of cultivation—were in great part attained, as the following sentences from Arthur Young's Political Arithmetic (1774) will show: 'What say they [the opponents of enclosure] to the sands of Norfolk, Suffolk, and Nottinghamshire, which yield corn and mutton and beef from the force of INCLOSURE alone? What say they to the Wolds of York and Lincoln, which from barren heaths at 1s. per acre are by INCLOSURE alone rendered profitable farms? . . . What say they to the vast tracts in the peak of Derby which by INCLOSURE alone are changed from black regions of ling to fertile fields covered with cattle?' But it is also certain that enclosures 'tended to divorce the poor man from the soil'; and from about 1800 the evil consequences of the squeezing out of small farmers began to be more and more evident, and to find expression in such impassioned (and in some degree exaggerated) outbursts as the following, in The Splendid Village, by Ebenezer Elliott (1833).*

WHERE is the Common, once with blessings rich—  
 The poor man's Common?—like the poor man's flitch  
 And well-fed ham, which erst his means allow'd,  
 'Tis gone to bloat the idle and the proud!  
 To raise high rents! and lower low profits!—Oh,  
 To-morrow of the Furies! thou art slow;  
 But where, thou tax-plough'd waste, is now the hind  
 Who lean'd on his own strength, his heart and mind?  
 Where is the matron, with her busy brow?  
 Their sheep, where are they? and their famous cow? 10  
 Their strutting game-cock, with his many queens?  
 Their glowing hollyoaks, and winter greens?  
 The chubby lad, that cheer'd them with his look,  
 And shared his breakfast with the home-bred rook?  
 The blooming girls, that scour'd the snow-white pail,  
 Then waked with joy the echoes of the vale,  
 And, laden homewards, near the sparkling rill,  
 Cropp'd the first rose that blush'd beneath the hill?  
 All vanish'd—with their rights, their hopes, their lands. . . .

But yonder stalks the greatest man alive ! 20  
 One farmer prospers now, where prosper'd five !  
 Ah ! where are they ?—wives, husbands, children—where ?—  
 Two died in gaol, and one is dying there ;  
 One broken-hearted, fills a rural grave ;  
 And one still lives, a pauper and a slave.  
 Where are their children ?—Some, beyond the main,  
 Convicts for crime ; some, here, in hopeless pain,  
 Poor wanderers, blue with want ; and some are dead ;  
 And some, in towns, earn deathily their bread.  
 All rogues, they died, or fail'd—'twas no great harm ; 30  
 Why ask who fails, if Jolter gets a farm ?  
 Full well thrives he—the man is not a fool,  
 Albeit a tyrant, and his landlord's tool.  
 He courses ; he affords, and can afford,  
 To keep his blood, and fox-hunt with my Lord. . . .

Hence, yeoman, hence !—thy grandsire's land resign ;  
 Yield, peasant, to my lord and power divine !  
 Thy grange is gone, your cluster'd hovels fall ;  
 Proud domes expand, the park extends its wall ;  
 Then kennels rise, the massive Tuscan grows ; 40  
 And dogs sublime, like couchant kings, repose !  
 Lo ! ' still-all-Greek-and-glorious ' art is here !  
 Behold the pagod of a British Peer !  
 Admire, ye proud ! and clap your hands, ye poor !  
 The father of this kingling was a boor !

#### IV. THE HARVEST-HOME : OLD STYLE

*From The Farmer's Boy, by Robert Bloomfield, a self-taught poet. This descriptive piece, though now half-forgotten, scored a great success on its first appearance in 1800.*

Now, ere sweet SUMMER bids its long adieu,  
 And winds blow keen where late the blossom grew,  
 The bustling day and jovial night must come,  
 The long accustom'd feast of HARVEST-HOME. . . .

Behold the sound oak table's massy frame  
 Bestride the kitchen floor ! the careful dame

And gen'rous host invite their friends around,  
 While all that clear'd the crop, or till'd the ground,  
 Are guests by right of custom—old and young ;  
 And many a neighbouring yeoman join the throng, 10  
 With artizans that lent their dext'rous aid,  
 When o'er each field the flaming sun-beams play'd.

Yet Plenty reigns, and from her boundless hoard,  
 Though not one jelly trembles on the board,  
 Supplies the feast with all that sense can crave ;  
 With all that made our great forefathers brave,  
 Ere the cloy'd palate countless flavours try'd,  
 And cooks had Nature's judgment set aside.  
 With thanks to Heaven, and tales of rustic lore,  
 The mansion echoes when the banquet's o'er ; 20  
 A wider circle spreads, and smiles abound,  
 As quick the frothing horn performs its round ;  
 Care's mortal foe ; that sprightly joys imparts  
 To cheer the frame and elevate their hearts.  
 Here, fresh and brown, the hazel's produce lies  
 In tempting heaps, and peals of laughter rise,  
 And crackling Music, with the frequent *Song*,  
 Unheeded bear the midnight hour along.

Here once a year Distinction low'rs its crest,  
 The master, servant, and the merry guest, 30  
 Are equal all ; and round the happy ring  
 The reaper's eyes exulting glances fling,  
 And, warm'd with gratitude, he quits his place,  
 With sun-burnt hands and ale-enliven'd face,  
 Refills the jug his honour'd host to tend,  
 To serve at once the master and the friend ;  
 Proud thus to meet his smiles, to share his tale,  
 His nuts, his conversation, and his ale.

## V. THE DECAY OF FARMING LIFE

*From Cobbett's Rural Rides.—The penultimate paragraph refers to the notorious 'Speenhamland System', by which wages were supplemented out of the parish rates.*



*Reigate, Thursday Evening, 20th October, 1825.* Having done my business at Hartswood today about eleven o'clock, I went to a sale at a farm, which the farmer is quitting. Here I had a view of what has long been going on all over the country. The farm, which belongs to *Christ's Hospital*, has been held by a man of the name of Charington, in whose family the lease has been, I hear, a great number of years. The house is hidden by trees. It stands in the Weald of Surrey, close by the *River Mole*, which is here a mere rivulet, though just below this house the rivulet supplies the very prettiest flour-mill I ever saw in my life.

Everything about this farm-house was formerly the scene of *plain manners* and *plentiful living*. Oak clothes-chests, oak bedsteads, oak chests of drawers, and oak tables to eat on, long, strong, and well supplied with joint stools. Some of the things were many hundreds of years old. But all appeared to be in a state of decay and nearly of *disuse*. There appeared to have been hardly any *family* in that house, where formerly there were, in all probability, from ten to fifteen men, boys, and maids : and, which was worst of all, there was a *parlour*. Aye, and a *carpet* and *bell-pull* too ! One end of the front of this once plain and substantial house had been moulded into a '*parlour*' ; and there was the mahogany table, and the fine chairs, and the fine glass, and all as bare-faced upstart as any stock-jobber in the kingdom can boast of. And, there were the decanters, the glasses, the '*dinner-set*' of crockery-ware, and all just in the true stock-jobber style. And I dare say it has been '*Squire Charington* and the *Miss Charingtons* ; and not plain Master Charington, and his son Hodge, and his daughter Betty Charington, all of whom this accursed system has, in all likelihood, transmuted into a species of mock gentlefolks, while it has ground the labourers down into real slaves. Why do not farmers now *feed* and *lodge* their work-people, as they did formerly ? Because they cannot keep them *upon so little* as they give them in wages.



This is the real cause of the change. There needs no more to prove that the lot of the working classes has become worse than it formerly was. This fact alone is quite sufficient to settle this point. All the world knows, that a number of people, boarded in the same house, and at the same table, can, with as good food, be boarded much cheaper than those persons divided into twos, threes, or fours, can be boarded. This is a well-known truth : therefore, if the farmer now shuts his pantry against his labourers, and pays them wholly in money, is it not clear, that he does it because he thereby gives them a living *cheaper* to him ; that is to say, a *worse* living than formerly ? Mind, he has a *house* for them ; a kitchen for them to sit in, bed rooms for them to sleep in, tables, and stools, and benches, of everlasting duration. All these he has : all these *cost him nothing* ; and yet so much does he gain by pinching them in wages, that he lets all these things remain as of no use, rather than feed labourers in the house. Judge, then, of the *change* that has taken place in the condition of these labourers ! And, be astonished, if you can, at the *pauperism* and the *crimes* that now disgrace this once happy and moral England.

The land produces, on an average, what it always produced ; but, there is a new distribution of the produce. This 'Squire Charington's father used, I dare say, to sit at the head of the oak-table along with his men, say grace to them, and cut up the meat and the pudding. He might take a cup of *strong beer* to himself, when they had none ; but, that was pretty nearly all the difference in their manner of living. So that *all* lived well. But, the 'Squire had many *wine-decanter*s and *wine-glasses* and 'a *dinner set*,' and a '*breakfast set*,' and '*dessert knives*' ; and these evidently imply carryings on and a consumption that must of necessity have greatly robbed the long oak table if it had remained fully tenanted. That long table could not share in the work of the decaners and the dinner set. Therefore, it became almost untenanted ; the labourers retreated to hovels, called cottages ; and, in-

stead of board and lodging, they got money ; so little of it as to enable the employer to drink wine ; but, then, that he might not reduce them to *quite starvation*, they were enabled to come to him, in the *king's name*, and demand food *as paupers*. And, now, mind, that which a man receives in the *king's name*, he knows well he has *by force* ; and it is not in nature that he should *thank* any body for it, and least of all the party *from whom it is forced*. Then, if this sort of force be insufficient to obtain him enough to eat and to keep him warm, is it surprising, if he think it no great offence against God (who created no man to starve) to use another sort of FORCE more within his own control ? Is it, in short, surprising, if he resort to *theft* and *robbery* ? . . .

When the old farm-houses are down (and down they must come in time) what a miserable thing the country will be ! Those that are now erected are mere painted shells, with a Mistress within, who is stuck up in a place she calls a *parlour*, with, if she have children, the ' young ladies and gentlemen ' about her : some showy chairs and a sofa (a *sofa* by all means) : half a dozen prints in gilt frames hanging up : some swinging book-shelves with novels and tracts upon them : a dinner brought in by a girl that is perhaps better ' educated ' than she : two or three nick-nacks to eat instead of a piece of bacon and a pudding : the house too neat for a dirty-shoed carter to be allowed to come into ; and every thing proclaiming to every sensible beholder, that there is here a constant anxiety to make a *show* not warranted by the reality. The children (which is the worst part of it) are all too clever to *work* : they are all to be *gentlefolks*. Go to plough ! Good God ! What, ' young gentlemen ' go to plough ! They become *clerks*, or some skimmy-dish thing or other. They flee from the dirty *work* as cunning horses do from the bridle. What misery is all this !

## VI. WALKING IN THE COUNTRY

*A few fragments from one of Hazlitt's finest essays, 'On Going a Journey,' which appeared in Table Talk (1821-2).*

ONE of the pleasantest things in the world is going a journey ; but I like to go by myself. I can enjoy society in a room ; but out of doors, nature is company enough for me. . . . Instead of a friend in a post-chaise or in a Tilbury, to exchange good things with, and vary the same stale topics over again, for once let me have a truce with impertinence. Give me the clear blue sky over my head, and the green turf beneath my feet, a winding road before me, and a three hours' march to dinner—and then to thinking ! It is hard if I cannot start some game on these lone heaths. I laugh, I run, I leap, I sing for joy. From the point of yonder rolling cloud, I plunge into my past being, and revel there, as the sun-burnt Indian plunges headlong into the wave that wafts him to his native shore. Then long-forgotten things, like 'sunken wrack and sumless treasures,' burst upon my eager sight, and I begin to feel, think, and be myself again. Instead of an awkward silence, broken by attempts at wit or dull common-places, mine is that undisturbed silence of the heart which alone is perfect eloquence. . . .

I grant, there is one subject on which it is pleasant to talk on a journey ; and that is, what one shall have for supper when we get to our inn at night. The open air improves this sort of conversation or friendly altercation, by setting a keener edge on appetite. Every mile of the road heightens the flavour of the viands we expect at the end of it. How fine it is to enter some old town, walled and turreted, just at the approach of night-fall, or to come to some straggling village, with the lights streaming through the surrounding gloom ; and then after inquiring for the best entertainment that the place affords, to 'take one's ease at one's inn !' These eventful moments in our lives' history are too precious, too full of solid, heart-felt happi-

ness to be frittered and dribbled away in imperfect sympathy. I would have them all to myself, and drain them to the last drop : they will do to talk of or to write about afterwards. What a delicate speculation it is, after drinking whole goblets of tea,

‘ The cups that cheer, but not inebriate,’

and letting the fumes ascend into the brain, to sit considering what we shall have for supper—eggs and a rasher, a rabbit smothered in onions, or an excellent veal-cutlet ! Sancho in such a situation once fixed upon cow-heel ; and his choice, though he could not help it, is not to be disparaged. Then in the intervals of pictured scenery and Shandean contemplation, to catch the preparation and the stir in the kitchen—*Procul, O procul este profani !* . . . The *incognito* of an inn is one of its striking privileges—‘ lord of one’s-self, uncumber’d with a name.’ Oh ! it is great to shake off the trammels of the world and of public opinion—to lose our importunate, tormenting, everlasting personal identity in the elements of nature, and become the creature of the moment, clear of all ties—to hold to the universe only by a dish of sweet-breads, and to owe nothing but the score of the evening—and no longer seeking for applause and meeting with contempt, to be known by no other title than *the Gentleman in the parlour !*

## VII. IMPROVEMENTS IN ROADS

*In this passage from his Autobiographic Sketches (written in 1833), De Quincey, whose memory went back to about 1790, surveys the changes in the state of the roads up to 1830. John Loudon McAdam (1756–1836) was the inventor of the process (named after him) for constructing road-surfaces of broken flint and granite.*

THE reader whose birth attaches him to this present generation, having known only macadamised roads, cannot easily bring before his imagination the antique and almost aboriginal state of things which marked our

travelling system down to the end of the eighteenth century, and nearly through the first decennium of the present. . . . Not until our cotton system began to put forth blossoms, not until our trade and our steam-engines began to stimulate the coal mines, which in *their* turn stimulated *them*, did any great energy apply itself to our roads. In my childhood, standing with one or two of my brothers and sisters at the front windows of my mother's carriage, I remember one unvarying set of images before us. The postilion (for so were all carriages then driven) was employed not by fits and starts, but always and eternally, in *quartering*—*i.e.*, in crossing from side to side—according to the casualties of the ground. Before you stretched a wintry length of lane, with ruts deep enough to fracture the leg of a horse, filled to the brim with standing pools of rain water; and the collateral chambers of these ruts kept from becoming confluent by thin ridges, such as the Romans called *liræ*, to maintain the footing upon which *liræ*, so as not to swerve (or, as the Romans would say, *delirare*), was a trial of some skill both for the horses and their postilion. . . .

It was not until after the year 1815 that the main improvement took place in the English travelling system, so far as regarded speed. It is, in reality, to Mr. Macadam that we owe it. All the roads in England, within a few years, were remodelled, and upon principles of Roman science. From mere beds of torrents and systems of ruts, they were raised universally to the condition and appearance of gravel walks in private parks or shrubberies. The average rate of velocity was, in consequence, exactly doubled—ten miles an hour being now generally accomplished, instead of five. And at the moment when all further improvement upon this system had become hopeless, a new prospect was suddenly opened to us by railroads; which again, considering how much they have already exceeded the *maximum* of possibility, as laid down by all engineers during the progress of the Manchester and Liverpool line [1826-1830], may soon give



way to new modes of locomotion still more astonishing to our preconceptions.

## VIII. FROM DOVER TO LONDON BY POSTCHaise

*From Canto X of Byron's Don Juan (1824). His debonair hero is visiting England for the first time, on an embassy from the Empress of Russia.*

ON with the horses ! Off to Canterbury !

Tramp, tramp o'er pebble, and splash, splash through  
puddle ;

Hurrah ! how swiftly speeds the post so merry !

Not like slow Germany, wherein they muddle  
Along the road, as if they went to bury

Their fare ; and also pause besides, to fuddle  
With 'schnapps'—sad dogs ! whom 'Hundsot,' or  
'Verflucter,'

Affect no more than lightning a conductor.

Now there is nothing gives a man such spirits,

Leavening his blood as cayenne doth a curry, 10

As going at full speed—no matter where its

Direction be, so 't is but in a hurry,

And merely for the sake of its own merits ;

For the less cause there is for all this flurry,

The greater is the pleasure in arriving

At the great *end* of travel—which is driving. . . .

On ! on ! through meadows, managed like a garden,

A paradise of hops and high production ;

For, after years of travel by a bard in

Countries of greater heat, but lesser suction, 20

A green field is a sight which makes him pardon

The absence of that more sublime construction,

Which mixes up vines—olives—precipices—

Glaciers—volcanoes—oranges and ices.



And when I think upon a pot of beer—

But I won't weep!—and so drive on, postilions!  
As the smart boys spurred fast in their career,

Juan admired these highways of free millions—  
A country in all senses the most dear

To foreigner or native, save some silly ones, 30  
Who 'kick against the pricks' just at this juncture,  
And for their pains get only a fresh puncture.

What a delightful thing's a turnpike road!

So smooth, so level, such a mode of shaving  
The Earth, as scarce the eagle in the broad  
Air can accomplish, with his wide wings waving.

Had such been cut in Phaeton's time, the god

Had told his son to satisfy his craving  
With the York mail;—but onward as we roll,

*Surgit amari aliquid*—the toll! . . . 40

—Juan now was borne,  
Just as the day began to wane and darken,  
O'er the high hill, which looks with pride or scorn  
Toward the great city.—Ye who have a spark in  
Your veins of Cockney spirit, smile or mourn  
According as you take things well or ill;—  
Bold Britons, we are now on Shooter's Hill! . . .

A mighty mass of brick, and smoke, and shipping,  
Dirty and dusky, but as wide as eye  
Could reach, with here and there a sail just skipping 50  
In sight, then lost amidst the forestry  
Of masts; a wilderness of steeples peeping  
On tiptoe through their sea-coal canopy;  
A huge, dun Cupola, like a foolscap crown  
On a fool's head—and there is London Town!

## IX. A JOURNEY BY MAIL-COACH IN WINTER

*Mr. Pickwick and his friends, in Dickens's famous novel (Chap. XXVIII), are going down from London to Dingley Dell, in Kent, for Christmas.*

BUT we are so taken up and occupied with the good qualities of this saint Christmas, that we are keeping Mr. Pickwick and his friends waiting in the cold on the outside of the Muggleton coach, which they have just attained, well wrapped up in greatcoats, shawls, and comforters. . . . The coachman mounts to the box, Mr. Weller jumps up behind, the Pickwickians pull their coats round their legs and their shawls over their noses, the helpers pull the horse-cloths off, the coachman shouts out a cheery 'All right,' and away they go.

They have rumbled through the streets, and jolted over the stones, and at length reached the wide and open country. The wheels skim over the hard and frosty ground ; and the horses, bursting into a canter at a smart crack of the whip, step along the road as if the load behind them—coach, passengers, cod-fish, oyster-barrels, and all—were but a feather at their heels. They have descended a gentle slope, and enter upon a level, as compact and dry as a solid block of marble, two miles long. Another crack of the whip, and on they speed, at a smart gallop, the horses tossing their heads and rattling the harness, as if in exhilaration at the rapidity of the motion ; while the coachman, holding whip and reins in one hand, takes off his hat with the other, and resting it on his knees, pulls out his handkerchief, and wipes his forehead, partly because he has a habit of doing it, and partly because it's as well to show the passengers how cool he is, and what an easy thing it is to drive four-in-hand, when you have had as much practice as he has. Having done this very leisurely (otherwise the effect would be materially impaired), he replaces his handkerchief, pulls on his hat, adjusts his gloves, squares his elbows, cracks the whip again, and on they speed, more merrily than before. . . .

And now the bugle plays a lively air as the coach rattles through the ill-paved streets of a country town ; and the coachman, undoing the buckle which keeps his ribands together, prepares to throw them off the moment he stops. Mr. Pickwick emerges from his coat collar, and looks about him with great curiosity ; perceiving which, the coachman informs Mr. Pickwick of the name of the town, and tells him it was market-day yesterday, both of which pieces of information Mr. Pickwick retails to his fellow-passengers ; whereupon they emerge from their coat collars too, and look about them also. Mr. Winkle, who sits at the extreme edge, with one leg dangling in the air, is nearly precipitated into the street, as the coach twists round the sharp corner by the cheesemonger's shop, and turns into the market-place ; and before Mr. Snodgrass, who sits next to him, has recovered from his alarm, they pull up at the inn yard, where the fresh horses, with cloths on, are already waiting. The coachman throws down the reins and gets down himself, and the other outside passengers drop down also ; except those who have no great confidence in their ability to get up again ; and they remain where they are, and stamp their feet against the coach to warm them—looking, with longing eyes and red noses, at the bright fire in the inn bar, and the sprigs of holly with red berries which ornament the window.

But the guard has delivered, at the corn-dealer's shop, the brown paper packet he took out of the little pouch which hangs over his shoulder by a leathern strap ; and has seen the horses carefully put to ; and has thrown on the pavement the saddle which was brought from London on the coach roof ; and has assisted in the conference between the coachman and the hostler about the grey mare that hurt her off fore-leg last Tuesday ; and he and Mr. Weller are all right behind, and the coachman is all right in front, and the old gentleman inside, who has kept the window down full two inches all this time, has pulled it up again, and the cloths are off, and they are all

ready for starting, except the 'two stout gentlemen,' whom the coachman inquires after with some impatience. Hereupon the coachman, and the guard, and Sam Weller, and Mr. Winkle, and Mr. Snodgrass, and all the hostlers, and every one of the idlers, who are more in number than all the others put together, shout for the missing gentlemen as loud as they can bawl. A distant response is heard from the yard, and Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Tupman come running down it, quite out of breath, for they have been having a glass of ale a-piece, and Mr. Pickwick's fingers are so cold that he has been full five minutes before he could find the sixpence to pay for it. The coachman shouts an admonitory 'Now then, gen'l'm'n,' the guard re-echoes it; the old gentleman inside thinks it a very extraordinary thing that people *will* get down when they know there isn't time for it; Mr. Pickwick struggles up on one side, Mr. Tupman on the other; Mr. Winkle cries 'All right'; and off they start. Shawls are pulled up, coat collars are readjusted, the pavement ceases, the houses disappear; and they are once again dashing along the open road, with the fresh clear air blowing in their faces, and gladdening their very hearts within them.

Such was the progress of Mr. Pickwick and his friends by the Muggleton Telegraph, on their way to Dingley Dell; and at three o'clock that afternoon they all stood high and dry, safe and sound, hale and hearty, upon the steps of the Blue Lion, having taken on the road quite enough of ale and brandy, to enable them to bid defiance to the frost that was binding up the earth in its iron fetters.

## X. THE WONDER OF THE RAILWAY

*The supremacy of the mail-coach, which had been first used for carrying letters in 1784, lasted less than half a century. In 1825 the famous Stockton and Darlington railway line was opened; and by the forties the Railway Age had fairly begun. The Royal Mails were sent by rail from 1838. These verses were written by Ebenezer Elliott in 1837, on the opening of the line from Sheffield to Rotherham.*

FORESTS !—thou river'd landscape wide !—  
 Beneath storm-threatening skies,  
 I stand on war-mark'd Winco's side,  
 And see, with gladdened eyes,  
 Another triumph for mankind—  
 Another victory of mind  
 O'er man's worst enemies.

They come ! the shrieking steam ascends,  
 Slow moves the banner'd train ;  
 They rush ! the towering vapour bends— 10  
 The kindled wave again  
 Screams over thousands, thronging all  
 To witness now the funeral  
 Of law-created pain. . . .

Eternal River !—roaring still,  
 As roar'd thy foamy wave  
 When first each wild-rose skirted rill  
 Heard moorland echoes rave ;—  
 Thou seest, amid thy meadows green,  
 The goodliest sight that earth hath seen 20  
 Since man made fire his slave. . . .

But, lo ! the train !—On ! onward !—still  
 Loud shrieks the kindled wave ;  
 And back fly hamlet, tree, and hill,  
 White steam, and banners brave ;  
 And thoughts on vapoury wings are hurl'd,  
 To shake old thrones and change a world,  
 And dig Abaddon's grave. . . .

Eternal River!—roaring now,  
 As erst, in earlier years, 30  
 Ere grief began, with youthful brow,  
 To live an age of tears ;  
 Thou hear'st, beneath this brightening sky,  
 A voice of Power that will not die  
 While man hath hopes and fears.

He, (conquering fire, and time, and space),  
 Bids East and West shake hands ;  
 Brings, over ocean, face to face,  
 Earth's ocean-sever'd strands ;  
 And, on his iron road, will bear 40  
 Words that shall wither, in despair,  
 The tyrants of all lands.

## XI. FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF RAILWAY TRAVELLING

*From Greville's Journal.—The Liverpool and Birmingham line was opened in 1837, and that from Birmingham to London in 1838.*

18 July, 1837, Knowsley. Tired of doing nothing in London, and of hearing about the Queen, and the elections, I resolved to vary the scene and run down here to see the Birmingham railroad, Liverpool, and Liverpool races. So I started at five o'clock on Sunday evening, got to Birmingham at half-past five on Monday morning, and got upon the railroad at half-past seven. Nothing can be more comfortable than the vehicle in which I was put, a sort of chariot with two places, and there is nothing disagreeable about it but the occasional whiffs of stinking air which it is impossible to exclude altogether. The first sensation is a slight degree of nervousness and a feeling of being run away with, but a sense of security soon supervenes, and the velocity is delightful. Town after town, one park and château after another are left behind with



the rapid variety of a moving panorama, and the continual bustle and animation of the changes and stoppages make the journey very entertaining. The train was very long, and heads were continually popping out of the several carriages, attracted by well-known voices, and then came the greetings and exclamations of surprise, the 'Where are you going?' and 'How on earth came you here?' Considering the novelty of its establishment, there is very little embarrassment, and it certainly renders all other travelling irksome and tedious by comparison. It was peculiarly gay at this time, because there was so much going on. There were all sorts of people going to Liverpool races, barristers to the assizes, and candidates to their several elections. . . .

25 *July*. I remained at Knowsley till Saturday morning, when I went to Liverpool, got into the train at half-past eleven, and at five minutes after four arrived at Birmingham with an exact punctuality which is rendered easy by the great reserved power of acceleration, the pace at which we travelled being moderate and not above one half the speed at which they do occasionally go; one engineer went at the rate of forty-five miles an hour, but the Company turned him off for doing so.

## XII. A SONG OF THE SEA

*Despite appearances, this song was written by a landsman—Allan Cunningham, the Scots poet.*

A WET sheet and a flowing sea;  
 A wind that follows fast,  
 And fills the white and rustling sail,  
 And bends the gallant mast;  
 And bends the gallant mast, my boys,  
 While, like the eagle free,  
 Away the good ship flies, and leaves  
 Old England on the lee.

'O for a soft and gentle wind !'

I heard a fair one cry ; 10

But give to me the snoring breeze,

And white waves heaving high ;

And white waves heaving high, my boys,

The good ship tight and free—

The world of waters is our home,

And merry men are we.

There's tempest in yon hornèd moon,

And lightning in yon cloud ;

And hark the music, mariners—

The wind is piping loud ; 20

The wind is piping loud, my boys,

The lightning flashing free—

While the hollow oak our palace is,

Our heritage the sea.

### XIII. ONE OF NELSON'S SAILORS

*From the painter Haydon's Table-Talk, edited by his son in 1876.*

ONE day [1809], driving in the coach from Exeter to Wells, I was excessively amused by a sailor who had belonged to the 'Victory,' and was at Trafalgar. What he told me had all the simplicity of truth. He said as they were going into action, Lord Nelson came round to them and told them not to fire until they were sure of their object. 'When he came down,' said he, 'we were sky-larking, as everything was ready, and guns double-shotted.' 'What do ye mean by sky-larking?' said I. 'Jumping over each other's heads,' he answered, 'to amuse ourselves till we were near enough to fire.' He was a robust, fine weather-beaten fellow. At some inn we changed at, there was a well-pipeclayed, and clean, but spindle-legged local militia-man, smoking his pipe. Jack and he soon came to a misunderstanding of course. 'If I was thee,' said the militia-man, 'I would have put on a cleaner hand-

kercher about my neck.' '—— your eyes, what d'ye ask for your legs?' said the sailor. No human being could help roaring with laughter, and Jack enjoyed a complete triumph, as he deserved, after being four years at sea.

#### XIV. SAILORS ON SHORE

*Part of an essay by Leigh Hunt, 'Seamen on Shore', in his weekly journal, The Indicator (March 15, 1820).*

THE first object of the seaman on landing is to spend his money: but his first sensation is the strange firmness of the earth, which he goes treading in a sort of heavy light way, half waggoner and half dancing-master, his shoulders rolling, and his feet touching and going; the same way, in short, in which he keeps himself prepared for all the rolling chances of the vessel, when on deck. There is always, to us, this appearance of lightness of foot and heavy strength of upper works, in a sailor. And he feels it himself. He lets his jacket fly open, and his shoulders slouch, and his hair grow long to be gathered into a heavy pigtail; but when full dressed, he prides himself on a certain gentility of toe; on a white stocking and a natty shoe, issuing lightly out of the flowing blue trowser. His arms are neutral, hanging and swinging in a curve aloof; his hands, half open, look as if they had just been handling ropes, and had no object in life but to handle them again. He is proud of appearing in a new hat and slops, with a Belcher handkerchief flowing loosely round his neck, and the corner of another out of his pocket. Thus equipped, with pinchbeck buckles in his shoes (which he bought for gold) he puts some tobacco in his mouth, not as if he were going to use it directly, but as if he stuffed it in a pouch on one side, as a pelican does fish, to employ it hereafter: and so, with Bet Monson at his side, and perhaps a cane or whanghee twisted under his other arm, sallies forth to take possession of all Lubberland. He buys every thing that he comes athwart,—nuts, ginger-

bread, apples, shoe-strings, beer, brandy, gin, buckles, knives, a watch, (two, if he has money enough), gowns and handkerchiefs for Bet, and his mother and sisters, dozens of 'Superfine Best Men's Cotton Stockings,' dozens of 'Superfine Best Women's Cotton Ditto,' best good Check for Shirts (though he has too much already), infinite needles and thread (to sew his trowsers with some day), a footman's laced hat, Bear's Grease to make his hair grow (by way of joke), several sticks, all sorts of Jew articles, a flute (which he can't play, and never intends), a leg of mutton which he carries somewhere to roast, and for a piece of which the landlord of the Ship makes him pay twice what he gave for the whole :—in short, all that money can be spent upon, which is every thing but medicine gratis ; and this he would insist on paying for. He would buy all the painted parrots on an Italian's head, on purpose to break them, rather than not spend his money. He has fiddles and a dance at the Ship, with oceans of flip and grog ; and gives the blind fiddler tobacco for sweetmeats, and half a crown for treading on his toe. He asks the landlady, with a sigh, after her daughter Nance who first fired his heart with her silk-stockings ; and finding that she is married and in trouble, leaves five crowns for her ; which the old lady appropriates as part payment for a shilling in advance. He goes to the port playhouse with Bet Monson, and a great red handkerchief full of apples, gingerbread nuts, and fresh beef ; calls out for the fiddlers and Rule Britannia ; pelts Tom Sikes in the pit ; and compares Othello to the black ship's cook in his white night-cap. When he comes to London, he and some messmates take a hackney-coach, full of Bet Monsons and tobacco-pipes, and go through the streets smoking and lolling out of window.



## SECTION SEVEN

### SPORTS AND PASTIMES: MANNERS AND CUSTOMS

#### I. THE ENGLISH LOVE OF GAMES

*From Hazlitt's essay, 'Merry England', in The New Monthly Magazine, December 1825.*

No people are fonder of field-sports, Christmas gambols, or practical jests. Blindman's-buff, hunt-the-slipper, hot-cockles, and snap-dragon, are all approved English games, full of laughable surprises and 'hair-breadth 'scapes,' and serve to amuse the winter fire-side after the roast-beef and plum-pudding, the spiced ale and roasted crab, thrown (hissing-hot) into the foaming tankard. Punch (not the liquor, but the puppet) is not, I fear, of English origin; but there is no place, I take it, where he finds himself more at home or meets a more joyous welcome, where he collects greater crowds at the corners of streets, where he opens the eyes or distends the cheeks wider, or where the bangs and blows, the uncouth gestures, ridiculous anger and screaming voice of the chief performer excite more boundless merriment or louder bursts of laughter among all ranks and sorts of people. An English theatre is the very throne of pantomime; nor do I believe that the gallery and boxes of Drury-lane or Covent-garden filled on the proper occasion with holiday folks (big or little) yield the palm for undisguised, tumultuous, inextinguishable laughter to any spot in Europe. I do not speak of the refinement of the mirth (this is no fastidious speculation) but of its cordiality, on the return of these long looked-for and licensed periods; and I may add here, by



way of illustration, that the English common people are a sort of grown children, spoiled and sulky perhaps, but full of glee and merriment, when their attention is drawn off by some sudden and striking object. The May-pole is almost gone out of fashion among us : but May-day, besides its flowering hawthorns and its pearly dews, has still its boasted exhibition of painted chimney-sweepers and their Jack-o'-the-Green, whose tawdry finery, bedizened faces, unwonted gestures, and short-lived pleasures call forth good-humoured smiles and looks of sympathy in the spectators. There is no place where trap-ball, fives, prison-base, foot-ball, quoits, bowls are better understood or more successfully practised ; and the very names of a cricket-bat and ball make English fingers tingle. What happy days must ' Long Robinson ' have passed in getting ready his wickets and mending his bats, who when two of the fingers of his right hand were struck off by the violence of a ball, had a screw fastened to it to hold the bat, and with the other hand still sent the ball thundering against the boards that bounded *Old Lord's cricket-ground* ! What delightful hours must have been his in looking forward to the matches that were to come, in recounting the feats he had performed in those that were past ! I have myself whiled away whole mornings in seeing him strike the ball (like a countryman mowing with a scythe) to the farthest extremity of the smooth, level, sun-burnt ground, and with long, awkward strides, count the notches that made the victory sure ! Then again, cudgel-playing, quarter-staff, bull and badger-baiting, cock-fighting are almost the peculiar diversions of this island, and often objected to us as barbarous and cruel ; horse-racing is the delight and ruin of numbers ; and the noble science of boxing is all our own. Foreigners can scarcely understand how we can squeeze pleasure out of this pastime ; the luxury of hard blows given or received ; the joy of the ring ; nor the perseverance of the combatants. The English also excel, or are not excelled in wiring a hare, in stalking a deer, in shooting, fishing, and hunting.

England to this day boasts her Robin Hood and his merry men, that stout archer and outlaw, and patron-saint of the sporting calendar. What a cheerful sound is that of the hunters, issuing from the autumnal wood and sweeping over hill and dale !

——‘ A cry more tuneable  
Was never halloo’d to by hound or horn.’

What sparkling richness in the scarlet coats of the riders, what a glittering confusion in the pack, what spirit in the horses, what eagerness in the followers on foot, as they disperse over the plain, or force their way over hedge and ditch ! Surely, the coloured prints and pictures of these, hung up in gentlemen’s halls and village alehouses, however humble as works of art, have more life and health and spirit in them, and mark the pith and nerve of the national character more creditably than the mawkish, sentimental, affected designs of Theseus and Perithous, and Æneas and Dido, pasted on foreign *salons à manger*, and the interior of country-houses. If our tastes are not epic, nor our pretensions lofty, they are simple and our own ; and we may possibly enjoy our native rural sports, and the rude remembrances of them, with the truer relish on this account, that they are suited to us and we to them.

## II. THE EARLY DAYS OF CRICKET

*Cricket of a kind had been played since the Middle Ages, but the modern club and county game may be said to begin with the ‘ Hambledon men’, whose club was active by 1760. It lasted till 1825, by which time round-arm bowling, previously against the rules, was superseding the old under-arm delivery. John Nyren played for the Hambledon Club from 1778 till 1791. In 1833 appeared his Young Cricketer’s Tutor, including these recollections. It has been reissued, with much other cricketing lore, in Mr. E. V. Lucas’s delightful volume, The Hambledon Men (1907).*

I WAS born at Hambledon, in Hampshire—the *Attica* of the scientific art I am celebrating. No eleven in England could compare with the Hambledon, which met on the first Tuesday in May on Broad-Halfpenny. So renowned

a set were the men of Hambledon, that the whole country round would flock to see one of their trial matches. 'Great men,' indeed, 'have been among us—better, none' . . .

There was high feasting held on Broad-Halfpenny during the solemnity of one of our grand matches. Oh! it was a heart-stirring sight to witness the multitude forming a complete and dense circle round that noble green. Half the county would be present, and all their hearts with us. Little Hambledon pitted against All England was a proud thought for the Hampshire men. Defeat was glory in such a struggle—Victory, indeed, made us only 'a little lower than angels.' How those fine brawn-faced fellows of farmers would drink to our success! And then, what stuff they had to drink!—Punch!—not your new *Ponche à la Romaine*, or *Ponche à la Groseille*, or your modern cat-lap milk punch—punch be-deviled; but good, unsophisticated John Bull stuff—stark!—that would stand on end—punch that would make a cat speak! Sixpence a bottle! We had not sixty millions of interest to pay in those days. The ale too!—not the modern horror under the same name, that drives as many men melancholy-mad as the hypocrites do;—not the beastliness of these days, that will make a fellow's inside like a shaking bog—and as rotten; but barleycorn, such as would put the souls of three butchers into one weaver. . . . Then the quantity the fellows would eat! Two or three of them would strike dismay into a round of beef. They could no more have pecked in that style than they could have flown, had the infernal black stream (that type of Acheron!) which soddens the carcase of a Londoner, been the fertilizer of their clay. There would this company, consisting most likely of some thousands, remain patiently and anxiously watching every turn of fate in the game, as if the event had been the meeting of two armies to decide their liberty. And whenever a Hambledon man made a good hit, worth four or five runs, you would hear the deep mouths of the whole multitude baying away in pure Hampshire—'Go hard!—Go hard!—*Tich* and turn!—*tich* and turn!' To

the honour of my countrymen, let me bear testimony upon this occasion also, as I have already done upon others. Although their provinciality in general, and personal partialities individually, were naturally interested in behalf of the Hambledon men, I cannot call to recollection an instance of their wilfully stopping a ball that had been hit out among them by one of our opponents. Like *true* Englishmen, they would give an enemy fair play. How strongly are all those scenes, of fifty years bygone, painted in my memory!—and the smell of that ale comes upon me as freshly as the new May flowers.

### III. MR. PICKWICK AT A CRICKET-MATCH

*Mr. Pickwick and his friends, who are guests of Mr. Wardle at Manor Farm, Dingley Dell, Kent, meet Alfred Jingle, Esq., of No Hall, Nowhere, at the match between Dingley Dell and the neighbouring town of Muggleton.*

THE wickets were pitched, and so were a couple of marquees for the rest and refreshment of the contending parties. The game had not yet commenced. Two or three Dingley Dellers, and All-Muggletonians, were amusing themselves with a majestic air by throwing the ball carelessly from hand to hand; and several other gentlemen dressed like them, in straw hats, flannel jackets, and white trousers—a costume in which they looked very much like amateur stone-masons—were sprinkled about the tents, towards one of which Mr. Wardle conducted the party. . . .

‘Capital game—smart sport—fine exercise—very,’ were the words which fell upon Mr. Pickwick’s ear as he entered the tent; and the first object that met his eyes was his green-coated friend of the Rochester coach, holding forth, to the no small delight and edification of a select circle of the chosen of All-Muggleton. His dress was slightly improved, and he wore boots; but there was no mistaking him.

The stranger recognized his friends immediately; and, darting forward and seizing Mr. Pickwick by the hand,

dragged him to a seat with his usual impetuosity, talking all the while as if the whole of the arrangements were under his especial patronage and direction.

‘This way—this way—capital fun—lots of beer—hogs-heads; rounds of beef—bullocks; mustard—cart-loads; glorious day—down with you—make yourself at home—glad to see you—very.’

Mr. Pickwick sat down as he was bid, and Mr. Winkle and Mr. Snodgrass also complied with the directions of their mysterious friend. Mr. Wardle looked on in silent wonder.

‘Mr. Wardle—a friend of mine,’ said Mr. Pickwick.

‘Friend of yours!—My dear sir, how are you?—Friend of *my* friend’s—give me your hand, sir’—and the stranger grasped Mr. Wardle’s hand with all the fervour of a close intimacy of many years, and then stepped back a pace or two as if to take a full survey of his face and figure, and then shook hands with him again, if possible, more warmly than before.

‘Well; and how came you here?’ said Mr. Pickwick, with a smile in which benevolence struggled with surprise.

‘Come,’ replied the stranger—‘stopping at Crown—Crown at Muggleton—met a party—flannel jackets—white trousers—anchovy sandwiches—devilled kidneys—splendid fellows—glorious.’

Mr. Pickwick was sufficiently versed in the stranger’s system of stenography to infer from this rapid and disjointed communication that he had, somehow or other, contracted an acquaintance with the All-Muggletons, which he had converted, by a process peculiar to himself, into that extent of good-fellowship on which a general invitation may be easily founded. His curiosity was therefore satisfied, and putting on his spectacles he prepared himself to watch the play which was just commencing.

All-Muggleton had the first innings; and the interest became intense when Mr. Dumkins and Mr. Podder, two of the most renowned members of that most distinguished club, walked, bat in hand, to their respective wickets.



Mr. Luffey, the highest ornament of Dingley Dell, was pitched to bowl against the redoubtable Dumkins, and Mr. Struggles was selected to do the same kind office for the hitherto unconquered Podder. Several players were stationed, to 'look out,' in different parts of the field, and each fixed himself into the proper attitude by placing one hand on each knee, and stooping very much as if he were 'making a back' for some beginner at leap-frog. All the regular players do this sort of thing—indeed it is generally supposed that it is quite impossible to look out properly in any other position.

The umpires were stationed behind the wickets; the scorers were prepared to notch the runs; a breathless silence ensued. Mr. Luffey retired a few paces behind the wicket of the passive Podder, and applied the ball to his right eye for several seconds. Dumkins confidently awaited its coming with his eyes fixed on the motions of Luffey.

'Play!' suddenly cried the bowler. The ball flew from his hand straight and swift towards the centre stump of the wicket. The wary Dumkins was on the alert: it fell upon the tip of the bat, and bounded far away over the heads of the scouts, who had just stooped low enough to let it fly over them.

'Run—run—another.—Now, then, throw her up—up with her—stop there—another—no—yes—no—throw her up, throw her up!'—Such were the shouts which followed the stroke; and at the conclusion of which All-Muggleton had scored two. Nor was Podder behindhand in earning laurels wherewith to garnish himself and Muggleton. He blocked the doubtful balls, missed the bad ones, took the good ones, and sent them flying to all parts of the field. The scouts were hot and tired; the bowlers were changed and bowled till their arms ached; but Dumkins and Podder remained unconquered. Did an elderly gentleman essay to stop the progress of the ball, it rolled between his legs or slipped between his fingers. Did a slim gentleman try to catch it, it struck him on the nose, and bounded



pleasantly off with redoubled violence, while the slim gentleman's eyes filled with water, and his form writhed with anguish. Was it thrown straight up to the wicket, Dumkins had reached it before the ball. In short, when Dumkins was caught out, and Podder stumped out, All-Muggleton had notched some fifty-four, while the score of the Dingley Dellers was as blank as their faces. The advantage was too great to be recovered. In vain did the eager Luffey, and the enthusiastic Struggles, do all that skill and experience could suggest, to regain the ground Dingley De'll had lost in the contest—it was of no avail; and in an early period of the winning game Dingley Dell gave in, and allowed the superior prowess of All-Muggleton. . . .

'Capital game—well played—some strokes admirable,' said the stranger, as both sides crowded into the tent, at the conclusion of the game.

'You have played it, sir?' inquired Mr. Wardle, who had been much amused by his loquacity.

'Played it! Think I have—thousands of times—not here—West Indies—exciting thing—hot work—very.'

'It must be rather a warm pursuit in such a climate,' observed Mr. Pickwick.

'Warm!—red hot—scorching—glowing. Played a match once—single wicket—friend the colonel—Sir Thomas Blazo—who should get the greatest number of runs.—Won the toss—first innings—seven o'clock a.m.—six natives to look out—went in; kept in—heat intense—natives all fainted—taken away—fresh half-dozen ordered—fainted also—Blazo bowling—supported by two natives—couldn't bowl me out—fainted too—cleared away the colonel—wouldn't give in—faithful attendant—Quanko Samba—last man left—sun so hot, bat in blisters, ball scorched brown—five hundred and seventy runs—rather exhausted—Quanko mustered up last remaining strength—bowled me out—had a bath, and went out to dinner.'

## IV. DRIVING: CARRIAGES, CURRICLES, AND PHAETONS

*From Leigh Hunt's essay, 'Coaches', in The Indicator, August 23, 1820.*

THE carriage, as it is indifferently called (as if nothing less genteel could carry anyone) is a more decided thing than the chaise; it may be swifter even than the mail, leaves the stage at a still greater distance in every respect, and (forgetting what it may come to itself) darts by the poor old lumbering hackney with immeasurable contempt. It rolls with a prouder ease, than any other vehicle. It is full of cushions and comfort; elegantly coloured inside and out; rich, yet neat; light and rapid, yet substantial. The horses seem proud to draw it. The fat and fair-wigged coachman 'lends his sounding lash,' his arm only in action and that little, his body well-set with its own weight. The footman, in the pride of his non-chalance, holding by the straps behind, and glancing down sideways betwixt his cocked-hat and neckcloth, stands swinging from east to west upon his springy toes. The horses rush along amidst their glancing harness. Spotted dogs leap about them, barking with a princely superfluity of noise. The hammercloth trembles through all its fringe. The paint flashes in the sun. We, contemptuous of every thing less convenient, bow backwards and forwards with a certain indifferent air of gentility, infinitely predominant. Suddenly, with a happy mixture of turbulence and truth, the carriage dashes up by the curb-stone to the very point desired, and stops with a lordly wilfulness of decision. The coachman looks as if nothing had happened. The footman is down in an instant; the knocker reverberates into the farthest corner of the house; doors, both carriage and house, are open;—we descend, casting a matter-of-course eye at the bye-standers; and the moment we touch the pavement, the vehicle, as if conscious of what it has carried, and relieved from the weight of our

importance, recovers from its sidelong inclination with a jerk, tossing and panting, as it were, for very breath, like the proud heads of the horses. . . .

The prettiest of these vehicles is undoubtedly the cur-ricule, which is also the safest. There is something worth looking at in the pair of horses, with that sparkling pole of steel laid across them. It is like a bar of music, comprising their harmonious course. But to us, even gigs are but a sort of unsuccessful run at gentility. The driver, to all intents and purposes, had better be on the horse. Horseback is the noblest way of being carried in the world. It is cheaper than any other constant mode of riding ; it is common to all ranks ; and it is manly, graceful, and healthy. The handsomest mixture of danger with dignity, in the shape of a carriage, was the tall phaeton with its yellow wings. We remember looking up to it with respect in our childhood, partly for its own loftiness, partly for its name, and partly perhaps for the figure it makes in the prints to novels of that period. The most gallant figure which mere modern driving ever cut, was in the person of a late Duke of Hamilton ; of whom we have read or heard somewhere, that he used to dash round the streets of Rome, with his horses panting, and his hounds barking about his phaeton, to the equal fright and admiration of the Masters of the World, who were accustomed to witness nothing higher than a lumbering old coach or a cardinal on a mule.

## V. BOXING

*It must be remembered that our 'Queensberry Rules' were not drawn up until 1866. Before this all prize-fights were fought with bare fists, and usually 'to a finish'. To avoid trouble with the authorities, prize-fight meetings (technically illegal) were held in the open country, and men of fashion travelled considerable distances to see them.—The first extract is from The Fancy (1820), a pleasant little book of light verse by Keats's friend John Hamilton Reynolds ; 'The P.C.' (line 16) refers to the Pugilistic Club, founded in 1814 to lay down rules for boxing. The second extract comes from Hazlitt's*

*magnificent account of 'The Fight' at Hungerford in Berkshire, on December 11, 1821. It was published in the New Monthly Magazine, February, 1822.*

## I

*(In Praise of Boxing)*

'TIS LIFE to see the first dawn stain  
 With sallow light the window pane:—  
 To dress—to wear a rough drab coat,  
 With large pearl buttons all afloat  
 Upon the waves of plush:—To tie  
 A kerchief of the king-cup dye,  
 (White spotted with a small bird's eye)  
 Around the neck,—and from the nape  
 Let fall an easy fanlike cape:—  
 To quit the house at morning's prime, 10  
 At six or so—about the time  
 When watchmen, conscious of the day,  
 Puff out their lanthorn's rushlight ray. . . .

Oh, it *is* LIFE! to see a proud  
 And dauntless man step, full of hopes,  
 Up to the P.C. stakes and ropes,  
 Throw in his hat, and with a spring  
 Get gallantly within the ring;  
 Eye the wide crowd, and walk awhile,  
 Taking all cheerings with a smile: 20  
 To see him strip,—his well train'd form.  
 White, glowing, muscular, and warm,  
 All beautiful in conscious power,  
 Relaxed and quiet, till the hour;  
 His glossy and transparent frame,  
 In radiant plight to strive for fame!  
 To look upon the clean shap'd limb  
 In silk and flannel clothed trim;—  
 While round the waist the kerchief tied  
 Makes the flesh glow in richer pride. 30  
 'Tis more than LIFE,—to watch him hold  
 His hand forth, tremulous yet bold,

Over his second's, and to clasp  
 His rival's in a quiet grasp ;  
 To watch the noble attitude  
 He takes,—the crowd in breathless mood ;—  
 And then to see, with adamant start,  
 The muscles set,—and the great heart  
 Hurl a courageous splendid light  
 Into the eye,—and then,—the FIGHT !

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## II

*(A Prize-fight)*

READER, have you ever seen a fight ? If not, you have a pleasure to come, at least if it is a fight like that between the Gas-man [Tom Hickman] and Bill Neate. The crowd was very great when we arrived on the spot ; open carriages were coming up, with streamers flying and music playing, and the country-people were pouring in over hedge and ditch in all directions, to see their hero beat or be beaten. The odds were still on Gas, but only about five to four. Gully had been down to try Neate, and had backed him considerably, which was a damper to the sanguine confidence of the adverse party. About £200,000 were pending. Gas says he has lost £3,000, which were promised him by different gentlemen if he had won. He had presumed too much on himself, which had made others presume on him. This spirited and formidable young fellow seems to have taken for his motto the old maxim, that ' there are three things necessary to success in life—*Impudence ! Impudence ! Impudence !* ' It is so in matters of opinion, but not in the *Fancy*, which is the most practical of all things, though even here confidence is half the battle, but only half. Our friend had vapoured and swaggered too much, as if he wanted to grin and bully his adversary out of the fight. . . .

But enough of reflections, and to our tale. The day, as I have said, was fine for a December morning. The grass was wet, and the ground miry, and ploughed up with

multitudinous feet, except that, within the ring itself, there was a spot of virgin-green closed in and unprofaned by vulgar tread, that shone with dazzling brightness in the midday sun. For it was now noon, and we had an hour to wait. This is the trying time. It is then the heart sickens, as you think what the two champions are about, and how short a time will determine their fate. After the first blow is struck, there is no opportunity for nervous apprehensions; you are swallowed up in the immediate interest of the scene—but

‘Between the acting of a dreadful thing  
And the first motion, all the interim is  
Like a phantasma, or a hideous dream.’

I found it so as I felt the sun’s rays clinging to my back, and saw the white wintry clouds sink below the verge of the horizon. So, I thought, my fairest hopes have faded from my sight!—so will the Gas-man’s glory, or that of his adversary, vanish in an hour. The *swells* were parading in their white box-coats, the outer ring was cleared with some bruises on the heads and shins of the rustic assembly (for the *cockneys* had been distanced by the sixty-six miles); the time drew near, I had got a good stand; a bustle, a buzz, ran through the crowd, and from the opposite side entered Neate, between his second and bottle-holder. He rolled along, swathed in his loose great coat, his knock-knees bending under his huge bulk; and, with a modest, cheerful air, threw his hat into the ring. He then just looked round, and began quietly to undress; when from the other side there was a similar rush and an opening made, and the Gas-man came forward with a conscious air of anticipated triumph, too much like the cock-of-the-walk. He strutted about more than became a hero, sucked oranges with a supercilious air, and threw away the skin with a toss of his head, and went up and looked at Neate, which was an act of supererogation. The only sensible thing he did was, as he strode away from the modern Ajax, to fling out his arms, as if he wanted



to try whether they would do their work that day. By this time they had stripped, and presented a strong contrast in appearance. If Neate was like Ajax, 'with Atlantean shoulders, fit to bear' the pugilistic reputation of all Bristol, Hickman might be compared to Diomed, light, vigorous, elastic, and his back glistened in the sun, as he moved about, like a panther's hide. There was now a dead pause—attention was awestruck. Who, at that moment, big with a great event, did not draw his breath short—did not feel his heart throb? All was ready. They tossed up for the sun, and the Gas-man won. They were led up to the *scratch*—shook hands, and went at it.

In the first round every one thought it was all over. After making play a short time, the Gas-man flew at his adversary like a tiger, struck five blows in as many seconds, three first, and then following him as he staggered back, two more, right and left, and down he fell, a mighty ruin. There was a shout, and I said, 'There is no standing this.' Neate seemed like a lifeless lump of flesh and bone, round which the Gas-man's blows played with the rapidity of electricity or lightning, and you imagined he would only be lifted up to be knocked down again. It was as if Hickman held a sword or a fire in that right hand of his, and directed it against an unarmed body. They met again, and Neate seemed, not cowed, but particularly cautious. I saw his teeth clenched together and his brows knit close against the sun. He held out both his arms at full length straight before him, like two sledge-hammers, and raised his left an inch or two higher. The Gas-man could not get over this guard—they struck mutually and fell, but without advantage on either side. It was the same in the next round; but the balance of power was thus restored—the fate of the battle was suspended. No one could tell how it would end. This was the only moment in which opinion was divided; for, in the next, the Gas-man aiming a mortal blow at his adversary's neck, with his right hand, and failing from the length he had to reach, the other returned it with his left at full swing, planted

a tremendous blow on his cheek-bone and eyebrow, and made a red ruin of that side of his face. The Gas-man went down, and there was another shout—a roar of triumph as the waves of fortune rolled tumultuously from side to side. This was a settler. Hickman got up, and ‘grinned horrible a ghastly smile,’ yet he was evidently dashed in his opinion of himself; it was the first time he had ever been so punished; all one side of his face was perfect scarlet, and his right eye was closed in dingy blackness, as he advanced to the fight, less confident, but still determined. After one or two rounds, not receiving another such remembrancer, he rallied and went at it with his former impetuosity. But in vain. His strength had been weakened,—his blows could not tell at such a distance,—he was obliged to fling himself at his adversary, and could not strike from his feet; and almost as regularly as he flew at him with his right hand, Neate warded the blow, or drew back out of its reach, and felled him with the return of his left. There was little cautious sparring—no half-hits—no tapping and trifling, none of the *petit-maitreship* of the art—they were almost all knock-down blows: the fight was a good stand-up fight. The wonder was the half-minute time. If there had been a minute or more allowed between each round, it would have been intelligible how they should by degrees recover strength and resolution; but to see two men smashed to the ground, smeared with gore, stunned, senseless, the breath beaten out of their bodies; and then, before you recover from the shock, to see them rise up with new strength and courage, stand ready to inflict or receive mortal offence, and rush upon each other ‘like two clouds over the Caspian’—this is the most astonishing thing of all: this is the high and heroic state of man! From this time forward the event became more certain every round; and about the twelfth it seemed as if it must have been over. Hickman generally stood with his back to me; but in the scuffle, he had changed positions, and Neate just then made a tremendous lunge at him, and hit him full in the face.

It was doubtful whether he would fall backwards or forwards ; he hung suspended for a second or two, and then fell back, throwing his hands in the air, and with his face lifted up to the sky. I never saw anything more terrific than his aspect just before he fell. All traces of life, of natural expression, were gone from him. His face was like a human skull, a death's head, spouting blood. The eyes were filled with blood, the nose streamed with blood, the mouth gaped blood. He was not like an actual man, but like a preternatural, spectral appearance, or like one of the figures in Dante's *Inferno*. Yet he fought on after this for several rounds, still striking the first desperate blow, and Neate standing on the defensive, and using the same cautious guard to the last, as if he had still all his work to do ; and it was not till the Gas-man was so stunned in the seventeenth or eighteenth round, that his senses forsook him, and he could not come to time, that the battle was declared over. Ye who despise the *Fancy*, do something to show as much *pluck*, or as much self-possession as this, before you assume a superiority which you have never given a single proof of by any one action in the whole course of your lives !

## VI. IN FAVOUR OF LOTTERIES

*Lotteries were a regular source of revenue to the government, and of amusement and excitement to the public, until they were declared illegal by an Act passed in 1826. This protest against the 'abolitionist' proposals comes from 'The Illustrious Defunct', a paper contributed by Charles Lamb to the New Monthly Magazine in January 1825.*

NEVER can the writer forget when, as a child, he was hoisted upon a servant's shoulder in Guildhall, and looked down upon the installed and solemn pomp of the then drawing Lottery. The two awful cabinets of iron, upon whose massy and mysterious portals, the royal initials were gorgeously emblazoned, as if after having deposited the unfulfilled prophecies within, the King himself had turned the lock and still retained the key in his pocket ;

—the bluecoat boy, with his naked arm, first converting the invisible wheel, and then diving into the dark recess for a ticket;—the grave and reverend faces of the commissioners eyeing the announced number;—the scribes below calmly committing it to their huge books;—the anxious countenances of the surrounding populace, while the giant figures of Gog and Magog, like presiding deities, looked down with a grim silence upon the whole proceeding,—constituted altogether a scene, which combined with the sudden wealth supposed to be lavished from those inscrutable wheels, was well calculated to impress the imagination of a boy with reverence and amazement. . . . Reason and experience, ever at their old spiteful work of catching and destroying the bubbles which youth delighted to follow, have indeed dissipated much of this illusion, but my mind so far retained the influence of that early impression, that I have ever since continued to deposit my humble offerings at its shrine whenever the ministers of the Lottery went forth with type and trumpet to announce its periodical dispensations; and though nothing has been doled out to me from its undiscerning coffers but blanks, or those more vexatious tantalizers of the spirit, denominated small prizes, yet do I hold myself largely indebted to this most generous diffuser of universal happiness. Ingrates that we are! are we to be thankful for no benefits that are not palpable to sense, to recognize no favours that are not of marketable value, to acknowledge no wealth unless it can be counted with the five fingers? If we admit the mind to be the sole depositary of genuine joy, where is the bosom that has not been elevated into a temporary elysium by the magic of the Lottery? Which of us has not converted his ticket, or even his sixteenth share of one, into a nest-egg of Hope, upon which he has sate brooding in the secret roosting-places of his heart, and hatched it into a thousand fantastical apparitions? . . . Verily the abolitionists have much to answer for!

## VII. VALENTINES IN COUNTRY AND TOWN

## I

## ST. VALENTINE'S DAY IN 'OUR VILLAGE' (BERKSHIRE)

*From Our Village, a series of descriptive sketches by Miss Mitford (1824).*

VALENTINE'S DAY is one of great stir and emotion in our little village. In large towns—especially in London—the wicked habit of quizzing has entirely destroyed the romance and illusion of that tender anniversary. But we in the country are, for the most part, uninfected by 'over-wiseness,' or 'over-niceness' (to borrow two of Sir Walter Raleigh's quaint but expressive phrases), and are content to keep the gracious festival of love-making and *billets-doux*, as simply and confidently as our ancestors of old. I do not mean to say, that every one of our youths and maidens pair on that day, like the 'goldfinch, bullfinch, greenfinch, and all the finches of the grove.'—Heaven forbid!—Nor that the spirit of fun hath so utterly evaporated from us, that we have no display of innocent trick or harmless raillery on that licensed morn:—all that I contend for is, that, in our parts, some truth may be found lurking amidst the fictions of those annual rhymes—that many a village beau hath so broken the ice of courtship—and that many a village belle hath felt her heart throb, as she glanced at the emblematic scroll, and tried to guess the sender, in spite of the assumed carelessness, the saucy head-tossings, and the pretty poutings with which she attempted to veil her real interest. In short, there is something like sincerity amongst us, even in a Valentine;—as witness the number of wooings begun on the Fourteenth of February, and finished in that usual end of courtships and comedies—a wedding—before Whitsuntide. Our little lame clerk, who keeps a sort of catalogue *raisonnée* of marriages, as a companion to the parish-register, computes those that issue from the bursting Valentine-



bag of our postman, at not less than three and a half per annum—that is to say, seven between two years.

But—besides the matches which spring, directly or indirectly, from the *billets* commonly called Valentines—there is another superstition connected with the day, which has no small influence on the destinies of our country maidens. They hold, that the first man whom they espy in the morning—provided that such man be neither of kin to them, nor married, nor an inmate of the same house—is to pass for their Valentine during the day; and, perhaps (for this is the secret clause which makes the observation important), to prove their husband for life. It is strange how much faith they put in this kind of *sortes virgilianae*—this turning over the living leaf of destiny; and how much pains they will take to cheat the fates, and see the man they like best first in spite of the stars! One damsel, for instance, will go a quarter of a mile about, in the course of her ordinary avocations, in order to avoid a youth whom she does not fancy; another shall sit within doors, with her eyes shut, half the morning, until she hears the expected voice of the favourite swain;—whilst, on their part, our country lads take care to place themselves each in the way of his chosen she; and a pretty lass would think herself overlooked, if she had not three or four standing round her door, or sauntering beneath her window, before sunrise.

## II

## ST. VALENTINE'S DAY IN LONDON

*From Charles Lamb's Elia (1823).*

THIS is the day on which those charming little missives cyleped Valentines, cross and intercross each other at every street and turning. The weary and all for-spent twopenny postman sinks beneath a load of delicate embarrassments, not his own. It is scarcely credible to what an extent this ephemeral courtship is carried on in this loving town, to the great enrichment of porters, and detri-



ment of knockers and bell-wires. In these little visual interpretations, no emblem is so common as the *heart*,—that little three-cornered exponent of all our hopes and fears,—the bestuck and bleeding heart ; it is twisted and tortured into more allegories and affectations than an opera hat. . . .

All Valentines are not foolish ; and I shall not easily forget thine, my kind friend (if I may have leave to call you so) E.B.—E.B. lived opposite a young maiden, whom he had often seen, unseen, from his parlour window in C—e-street. She was all joyousness and innocence, and just of an age to enjoy receiving a Valentine, and just of a temper to bear the disappointment of missing one with good humour. E.B. is an artist of no common powers ; in the fancy parts of designing, perhaps inferior to none ; his name is known at the bottom of many a well executed vignette in the way of his profession, but no further ; for E.B. is modest, and the world meets nobody half-way. E.B. meditated how he could repay this young maiden for many a favour which she had done him unknown ; for when a kindly face greets us, though but passing by, and never knows us again, nor we it, we should feel it as an obligation ; and E.B. did. This good artist set himself at work to please the damsel. It was just before Valentine's day three years since. He wrought, unseen and unsuspected, a wondrous work. We need not say it was on the finest gilt paper with borders—full, not of common hearts and heartless allegory, but all the prettiest stories of love from Ovid, and older poets than Ovid (for E.B. is a scholar). There was Pyramus and Thisbe, and be sure Dido was not forgot, nor Hero and Leander, and swans more than sang in Cayster, with mottos and fanciful devices, such as beseemed,—a work in short of magic. Iris dipt the woof. This on Valentine's eve he commended to the all-swallowing indiscriminate orifice—(O ignoble trust !)—of the common post ; but the humble medium did its duty, and from his watchful stand, the next morning, he saw the cheerful messenger knock, and by and by the

precious charge delivered. He saw, unseen, the happy girl unfold the Valentine, dance about, clap her hands, as one after one the pretty emblems unfolded themselves. She danced about, not with light love, or foolish expectations, for she had no lover ; or, if she had, none she knew that could have created those bright images which delighted her. It was more like some fairy present ; a Godsend, as our familiarly pious ancestors termed a benefit received, where the benefactor was unknown. It would do her no harm. It would her good for ever after. It is good to love the unknown. I only give this as a specimen of E.B. and his modest way of doing a concealed kindness.

Good-morrow to my Valentine, sings poor Ophelia ; and no better wish, but with better auspices, we wish to all faithful lovers, who are not too wise to despise old legends, but are content to rank themselves humble dioceses of old Bishop Valentine, and his true church.

## VIII. MAY FESTIVITIES IN TOWN AND COUNTRY

### I

#### THE LONDON CHIMNEY-SWEEPERS' MAY-DAY

*A letter from the poet Southey to his daughter Kate, aged ten.*

*May 4, 1820.*

MY DEAR KATE,—

Since I have been in London I have very often wished that you, and Isabel, and Bertha were with me for a little while, to see what a number of strange things there are to be seen in this great over-grown town. . . .

I arrived in London on May Day, which is a holiday for chimney-sweepers. All the chimney-sweepers, little and great, on that day are dressed as fine as they can make themselves, with ribbons of all colours, and a great deal of gilding about them, and feathers in their caps ; and they go about the streets with a wooden thing in one hand (such as the churchwardens carry about in the church

to collect money for a brief), and their brush in the other ; and with these they make a clatter, and beg money from those who stop to look at them. They have generally a green man in company who is also called ' Jack in the Bush,' because he is in the middle of a green bush, which covers him all over, head and all, so that you can see nothing but his feet, and he goes dancing with the rest. This bush is ornamented with ribbons, and I have seen them in former times half covered with bright pewter pots and dishes, which it must have been a great fatigue to carry about and dance under their weight, especially in a hot day, and being so shut up from the air. This Jack in the Bush is a comical sight, but I am sorry to say that it does harm by frightening horses : a poor curate in the adjoining parish of Tooting the other day was thrown in consequence under the wheels of a stage coach, and it is not yet known whether he will recover from the dreadful hurts which he received.

But how you would like to see these chimney-sweepers that are so very fine ! I have seen you and Bell and Bertha look somewhat like them when you have dressed yourselves up ; but you were never half so fine, because you had no gilt finery about your clothes. Moreover the sweeps beautify their faces in a remarkable manner. I will tell you how to do it if you wish to be as fine as they are. You know their faces are very smutty : they let the smut stay that they may be known for chimney-sweepers : therefore to be like them you must first rub some soot upon your faces. Next, you must rub some whiting upon your cheeks and forehead, that there may be great white patches in the middle of the smut ; and then upon the white you must rub a little rose pink, and upon that again here and there you must stick some beaten gold, so that the face may be black and white, and purple, and gilt : if you do this, you will then be as fine as so many chimney-sweepers on the first of May. I must not forget to observe that the chimney-sweepers make a feast with the money which is given them ; and they are so

fond of their holiday that they make the first of May last the whole of the week. . . .

God bless you, my dear child.—

Your affectionate father,

ROBERT SOUTHEY.

## II

### A COUNTRY MAYING (HAMPSHIRE)

*From Miss Mitford's Our Village.*

DID any of my readers ever hear of a Maying? Let not any notions of chimney-sweeps soil the imagination of the gay Londoner! A country Maying is altogether a different affair from the street exhibitions which mix so much pity with our mirth, and do the heart good, perhaps, but not by gladdening it. A country Maying is a meeting of the lads and lasses of two or three parishes, who assemble in certain erections of green boughs called May-houses, to dance and—but I am going to tell all about it in due order, and must not forestall my description.

Last year we went to Bramley Maying. There had been two or three such merry-makings before in that inaccessible neighbourhood, where the distance from large towns, the absence of great houses, and the consequent want of all decent roads, together with a country of peculiar wildness and beauty, combine to produce a sort of modern Arcadia. We had intended to assist at a Maying in the forest of Pamber, thinking that the deep glades of that fine woodland scenery would be more congenial to the spirit of our English merriment, as it breathed more of Robin Hood and Maid Marian than a mere village green—to say nothing of its being of the two more accessible by four-footed and two-wheeled conveyances. But the Pamber day had been suffered to pass, and Bramley was the last Maying of the season. So to Bramley we went. . . .

Cross two fields more, and up a quiet lane, and we are at the Maying, announced afar off by the merry sound of

music, and the merrier clatter of childish voices. Here we are at the green ; a little turfy spot, where three roads meet, close shut in by hedgerows, with a pretty white cottage, and its long slip of a garden at one angle. I had no expectation of scenery so compact, so like a glade in a forest ; it is quite a cabinet picture, with green trees for the frame. In the midst grows a superb horse-chesnut, in the full glory of its flowery pyramids, and from the trunk of the chesnut the May-houses commence. They are covered alleys built of green boughs, decorated with garlands and great bunches of flowers, the gayest that blow—lilacs, Guelder-roses, pionies, tulips, stocks—hanging down like chandeliers among the dancers ; for of dancers, gay dark-eyed young girls in straw bonnets and white gowns, and their lovers in their Sunday attire, the May-houses were full. The girls had mostly the look of extreme youth, and danced well and quietly like ladies—too much so : I should have been glad to see less elegance and more enjoyment ; and their partners, though not altogether so graceful, were as decorous and indifferent as real gentlemen. It was quite like a ball-room, as pretty and almost as dull. Outside was the fun. It is the outside, the upper gallery of the world, that has that good thing. There were children laughing, eating, trying to cheat, and being cheated, round an ancient and practised vender of oranges and gingerbread ; and on the other side of the tree lay a merry groupe of old men, in coats almost as old as themselves, and young ones in no coats at all, excluded from the dance by the disgrace of a smock-frock. Who would have thought of etiquette finding its way into the May-houses ! That groupe would have suited Teniers ; it smoked and drank a little, but it laughed a great deal more. There were a few decent matronly-looking women, too, sitting in a cluster ; and young mothers strolling about with infants in their arms ; and ragged boys peeping through the boughs at the dancers ; and the bright sun shining gloriously on all this innocent happiness. Oh, what a pretty sight it was !



## IX. A VISIT TO VAUXHALL GARDENS

*Vauxhall and Ranelagh Gardens were London's most popular pleasure resorts throughout the eighteenth century and well into the nineteenth. Of Vauxhall, the less 'exclusive' of the two, we hear in Fanny Burney's novel Evelina (1778). It declined in popularity after about 1835, and has long since vanished in the sea of London's houses.—'Corinthian' Tom is a rich young man-about-town, Jerry Hawthorn his 'country cousin'; Bob Logic, the 'Oxonian', is their learned, but gay, friend. The extract is from Pierce Egan's Life in London (1821), a popular work similar to, and imitated in, Real Life in London.*

'I PERCEIVE,' said TOM, 'on perusing the newspaper, Vauxhall Gardens are open, and therefore, JERRY, to-night we will pay them a visit.' 'It is an extraordinary place, indeed,' replied HAWTHORN, 'if my *Old Dad* and *Mam* have not exaggerated its grandeur; but, as the *old people* have not been much used to *sights*, it may account for their astonishment and rapture in speaking about them.' 'I am not surprised at that,' answered TOM, smiling; 'in my humble opinion, it has not its equal in the world.' . . . 'To me,' said LOGIC, 'Vauxhall is the festival of LOVE and HARMONY, and produces a most happy mixture of society. There is no *precision* about it, and every person can be *accommodated*, however *substantial*, or *light* and *airy* their *palates*. If *eating*, my dear Jerry, is the object in view, you will perceive tables laid out in every box, and the order is only wanted by the waiter instantly to gratify the appetite. If *drinking*, the *punch* is so prime, and immediately follows the call, that it will soon make you as lively as a harlequin. If inclined to *waltz* or to *reel*, partners can be procured without the formality of a master of the ceremonies. If you are fond of *singing*, the notes of that ever-green, Mrs. BLAND, never fail to touch the heart. If attached to *music*, the able performers in the orchestra, the Pandean minstrels, and regimental bands, in various parts of the gardens, prove quite a treat. If *promenading* is your forte, you will find illuminated walks of the most interesting and animated description. Numerous persons of the highest quality; myriads of lovely



females, with gaiety beaming upon every countenance ; and the pleasure of meeting with old friends and acquaintances, render the *tout ensemble* impressively elegant and fascinating. Even the *connoisseur* in paintings may find subjects at Vauxhall too rich to be passed over in haste. In short, there is such an endless variety of amusements, in rapid succession, from the song to the dance—from refreshment to the glass—from the cascade to the fireworks, that time positively flies in these Gardens.’ . . .

‘It is really delightful,’ exclaimed JERRY, on his entering the Gardens, during the first act of the concert ; ‘I was, on my first visit, enraptured with Sydney Gardens, at Bath ; but, I must confess, that the brilliancy of this scene is so superior that it appears to me like a NEW WORLD, and you have not, my friends, *overrated* it.’

HAWTHORN, under the guidance of his *pals*, was not long in exploring the illuminated walks, the rotunda, and everything belonging to this fashionable place of resort. Our hero was in high spirits ; LOGIC was also *ripe* for a *spree* ; and the CORINTHIAN so agreeable in disposition, that he made known to his two friends he was ready to *accommodate* them in any proposition they might feel inclined to make. JERRY expressed himself much pleased with arrangement and performance of the concert ; and he likewise observed, the music of the songs reflected considerable credit on the talents of the composer. On passing through the rooms attached to the rotunda, in which the paintings of *Hogarth* and *Hayman* are exhibited, and also the portraits of the late King and Queen, on their coming to the throne, JERRY, with a smile, retorted upon LOGIC, ‘that those paintings certainly could not be passed over in haste, and if the proprietors of the *Gardens* thought *catalogues* were not necessary, it would, however, prove much more pleasing to the visitors if a few lines were painted under them, by way of *explanation*.’ ‘I must agree with your remarks,’ replied LOGIC ; ‘no visitor ought to be suffered to remain in the *dark* on any subject amidst such a blaze of illumination. Never mind criti-

cising any more about these pictures ; let us retire to a nice little box, for I assure you my *ogles* have feasted long enough, and I stand in need of much more substantial refreshment. Some burnt-wine, *ham-shavings*, chickens, sherry, and a lively drop of arrack-punch, my boys, will enable us to finish the evening like *trumps*.' . . . The *bottle* was not suffered to stand still by our heroes, and the *punch* also moved off with great facility, till the lively military band invited them once more to join the merry dance, when LOGIC, full of fun and laughter, said, 'he was now able to *reel* with any lady or gentleman in the Gardens.' 'Yes,' replied TOM, laughing heartily, 'I'll back you on that score, BOB ; but not to *dance*.' The elegant appearance and address of the CORINTHIAN soon procured him lots of dashing partners : JERRY was not behind his Coz in that respect ; and the agility both our heroes displayed on the 'light fantastic toe' attracted numerous *gazers*. . . . On the conclusion of the dance, TOM and JERRY traversed the Gardens, and enjoyed themselves to the utmost extent in all the variety they afforded, till day-light had long given them the hint it was time to think of home.



## SECTION EIGHT

### TOWN LIFE: LONDON

#### I. THE PRAISE OF LONDON

*In a letter from Charles Lamb to Thomas Manning, November 28, 1800.*

STREETS, streets, streets, markets, theatres, churches, Covent Gardens, shops sparkling with pretty faces of industrious milliners, neat sempstresses, ladies cheapening, gentlemen behind counters lying, authors in the street with spectacles, George Dyers (you may know them by their gait), lamps lit at night, pastry-cooks' and silver-smiths' shops, beautiful Quakers of Pentonville, noise of coaches, drowsy cry of mechanic watchman at night, with bucks reeling home drunk; if you happen to wake at midnight, cries of Fire and Stop thief; inns of court, with their learned air, and halls, and butteries, just like the Cambridge colleges; old book-stalls, Jeremy Taylors, Burtons on Melancholy, and Religio Medicis on every stall. These are thy pleasures, O London-with-the-many sins.

#### II. THE APPROACH TO LONDON

*From De Quincey's Autobiographic Sketches.*

It was a most heavenly day in May of this year (1800), when I first beheld and first entered this mighty wilderness, the city—no! not the city, but the nation—of London. Often since then, at distances of two and three hundred miles or more from this colossal emporium of men, wealth, arts, and intellectual power, have I felt the

sublime expression of her enormous magnitude in one simple form of ordinary occurrence—viz., in the vast droves of cattle, suppose upon the great north roads, all with their heads directed to London, and expounding the size of the attracting body, together with the force of its attractive power, by the never-ending succession of these droves, and the remoteness from the capital of the lines upon which they were moving. A suction so powerful, felt along radii so vast, and a consciousness, at the same time, that upon other radii still more vast, both by land and by sea, the same suction is operating, night and day, summer and winter, and hurrying for ever into one centre the infinite means needed for her infinite purposes, and the endless tributes to the skill or to the luxury of her endless population, crowds the imagination with a pomp to which there is nothing corresponding upon this planet, either amongst the things that have been, or the things that are. Or, if any exception there is, it must be sought in ancient Rome. We, upon this occasion, were in an open carriage, and, chiefly (as I imagine) to avoid the dust, we approached London by rural lanes, where any such could be found, or, at least, along by-roads, quiet and shady, collateral to the main roads. In that mode of approach, we missed some features of the sublimity belonging to any of the common approaches upon a main road; we missed the whirl and the uproar, the tumult and the agitation, which continually thicken and thicken throughout the last dozen miles before you reach the suburbs. Already at three stages' distance (say, 40 miles from London), upon some of the greatest roads, the dim presentiment of some vast capital reaches you obscurely, and like a misgiving. This blind sympathy with a mighty but unseen object, some vast magnetic range of Alps, in your neighbourhood, continues to increase, you know not how. Arrived at the last station for changing horses, Barnet, suppose, on one of the north roads, or Hounslow on the western, you no longer think (as in all other places) of naming the next stage; nobody says,

on pulling up, 'Horses on to London'—that would sound ridiculous ; one mighty idea broods over all minds, making it impossible to suppose any other destination. Launched upon this final stage, you soon begin to feel yourself entering the stream as it were of a Norwegian *mælstrom* ; and the stream at length becomes the rush of a cataract. . . . Finally, for miles before you reach a suburb of London such as Islington, for instance, a last great sign and augury of the immensity which belongs to the coming metropolis forces itself upon the dullest observer, in the growing sense of his own utter insignificance. Everywhere else in England, you yourself, horses, carriage, attendants (if you travel with any), are regarded with attention, perhaps even curiosity : at all events you are seen. But, after passing the final post-house on every avenue to London, for the latter ten or twelve miles, you become aware that you are no longer noticed : nobody sees you ; nobody hears you ; nobody regards you ; you do not even regard yourself. In fact, how should you at the moment of first ascertaining your own total unimportance in the sum of things—a poor shivering unit in the aggregate of human life ?

### III. LONDON : MORNING : ON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE AT DAWN, 1802

*A famous sonnet by Wordsworth, with the passage from his sister Dorothy's journal recording the experience which inspired it. They were in such close sympathy that they observed life, as a rule, in much the same way ; which is not often true of brothers and sisters.*

#### I

LEFT London [July 31, 1802] between five and six o'clock of the morning outside the Dover coach. A beautiful morning. The city, St. Paul's, with the river, a multitude of little boats, made a beautiful sight as we crossed Westminster Bridge ; the houses, not overhung by their clouds of smoke, were spread out endlessly ; yet the sun shone so brightly, with such a pure light, that there was



something like the purity of one of Nature's own grand spectacles.

## II

EARTH has not anything to show more fair :  
 Dull would he be of soul who could pass by  
 A sight so touching in its majesty :  
 This City now doth, like a garment, wear  
 The beauty of the morning ; silent, bare,  
 Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie  
 Open unto the fields, and to the sky ;  
 All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.  
 Never did sun more beautifully steep  
 In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill ;      10  
 Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep !  
 The river glideth at his own sweet will :  
 Dear God ! the very houses seem asleep ;  
 And all that mighty heart is lying still !

## IV. LONDON : NIGHT

*From Dickens's Sketches by Boz (1836).*

THE streets of London, to be beheld in the very height of their glory, should be seen on a dark, dull, murky winter's night, when there is just enough damp gently stealing down to make the pavement greasy, without cleansing it of any of its impurities ; and when the heavy lazy mist, which hangs over every object, makes the gas-lamps look brighter, and the brilliantly-lighted shops more splendid, from the contrast they present to the darkness around. All the people who are at home on such a night as this, seem disposed to make themselves as snug and comfortable as possible ; and the passengers in the streets have excellent reason to envy the fortunate individuals who are seated by their own firesides. . . .

The streets in the vicinity of the Marsh-gate and Victoria Theatre present an appearance of dirt and discomfort on such a night, which the groups who lounge

about them in no degree tend to diminish. Even the little block-tin temple sacred to baked potatoes, surmounted by a splendid design in variegated lamps, looks less gay than usual ; and as to the kidney-pie stand, its glory has quite departed. The candle in the transparent lamp, manufactured of oil-paper, embellished with 'character,' has been blown out fifty times, so the kidney-pie merchant, tired with running backwards and forwards to the next wine-vaults, to get a light, has given up the idea of illumination in despair, and the only signs of his 'where-about', are the bright sparks, of which a long irregular train is whirled down the street every time he opens his portable oven to hand a hot kidney-pie to a customer.

Flat fish, oyster, and fruit vendors linger hopelessly in the kennel, in vain endeavouring to attract customers ; and the ragged boys who usually disport themselves about the streets, stand crouched in little knots in some projecting doorway, or under the canvas blind of the cheesemonger's, where great flaring gas-lights, unshaded by any glass, display huge piles of bright red, and pale yellow cheeses, mingled with little five-penny dabs of dingy bacon, various tubs of weekly Dorset, and cloudy rolls of 'best fresh.' . . .

It is nearly eleven o'clock, and the cold thin rain which has been drizzling so long, is beginning to pour down in good earnest ; the baked-potato man has departed—the kidney-pie man has just walked away with his warehouse on his arm—the cheesemonger has drawn in his blind, and the boys have dispersed. The constant clicking of pattens on the slippy and uneven pavement, and the rustling of umbrellas, as the wind blows against the shop-windows, bear testimony to the inclemency of the night ; and the policeman, with his oilskin cape buttoned closely round him, seems as he holds his hat on his head, and turns round to avoid the gust of wind and rain which drives against him at the street-corner, to be very far from congratulating himself on the prospect before him.

The little chandler's shop with the cracked bell behind

the door, whose melancholy tinkling has been regulated by the demand for quarterns of sugar and half-ounces of coffee, is shutting up. The crowds which have been passing to and fro during the whole day, are rapidly dwindling away ; and the noise of shouting and quarrelling which issues from the public-houses, is almost the only sound that breaks the melancholy stillness of the night.

## V. THE LONDON SHOPS

*Described in Leigh Hunt's essay 'Of the Sight of Shops', in The Indicator, May 31, 1820.*

THOUGH we are such lovers of the country, we can admire London in some points of view ; and among others, for the entertainment to be derived from its shops. Their variety and brilliancy can hardly fail of attracting the most sluggish attention. . . . We prefer the country a million times over for walking in generally, especially if we have the friends in it that enjoy it as well ; but there are seasons when the very streets may vie with it. If you have been solitary, for instance, for a long time, it is pleasant to get among your fellow-creatures again, even to be jostled and elbowed. If you live in town, and the weather is showery, you may get out in the intervals of rain, and find a quickly dried pavement and a set of brilliant shops very pleasant. Nay, we have known days, even in spring, when a street may out-do the finest aspects of the country ; but then it is only when the ladies are abroad, and there happens to be a run of agreeable faces that day. For whether it is fancy or not, or whether certain days do not rather bring out certain people, it is a common remark, that one morning you shall meet a succession of good looks, and another encounter none but the reverse. We do not merely speak of handsome faces ; but of those which are charming, or otherwise, whatever be the cause. We suppose the money-takers are all abroad one day, and the heart-takers the other.

It is to be observed, that we are not speaking of utility in this article, except indeed of the great utility of agreeableness. A candid leather-cutter, therefore, will pardon us, if we do not find any thing very attractive in his premises. So will his friend the shoemaker, who is bound to like us rural pedestrians. . . . A tavern and coffee-house is a pleasant sight, from its sociality ; not to mention the illustrious club memories of the times of Shakespeare and the Tatlers. The rural transparencies, however, which they have in their windows, with all our liking of the subject, would perhaps be better in any others ; for tavern-sociality is a town-thing, and should be content with town ideas. A landscape in the window makes us long to change it at once for a rural inn ; to have a rosy-faced damsel attending us, instead of a sharp and serious waiter ; and to catch, in the intervals of chat, the sound of a rookery instead of cookery. We confess that the commonest public-house in town is not such an eye-sore to us, as it is with some. It may not be very genteel, but neither is every thing that is rich. There may be a little too much drinking and roaring going on in the middle of the week ; but what, in the mean time, are pride, and avarice, and all the unsocial vices about ? Before we object to public-houses, and above all to their Saturday evening recreations, we must alter the systems that make them a necessary comfort to the poor and laborious. Till then, in spite of the vulgar part of the polite, we shall have an esteem for the Devil and the Bag o' Nails ; and like to hear, as we go along on Saturday night, the applauding knocks on the table that follow the song of ' Lovely Nan,' or ' Brave Captain Death,' or ' Tobacco is an Indian Weed,' or ' Why, Soldiers, why,' or ' Says Plato, why should man be vain,' or that judicious and unanswerable ditty commencing,

Now what can man more desire  
Nor sitting by a sea-coal fire ;  
And on his knees, &c.

We will even refuse to hear anything against a gin-shop,

till the various systems of the moralists and economists are discussed, and the virtuous leave off making prostitutes and drinking old port. In the mean time, we give up to any body's dislike the butcher's and fishmonger's, with their blood-dropping sheep and their crimped cod. And yet see how things go by comparison. We remember in our boyhood, when a lady from the West Indies, of a very delicate and high-bred nature, could find nothing about our streets that more excited her admiration, than the butchers' shops. She had no notion, from what she had seen in her own country, that so ugly a business could be carried on with so much neatness, and become actually passable. An open potato-shop is a dull, bleak-looking place, except in the height of summer. A cheesemonger's is then at its height of annoyance, unless you see a paviour or bricklayer coming out with his three-penn'orth on his bread ;—a better sight than the glutton's waddling away from the fishmonger's. A poulterer's is a dead-bodied business, with its birds and their lax necks. We dislike to see a bird any where but in the open air, alive, and quick. Of all creatures, restraint and death become its winged vivacity the least. For the same reason we hate aviaries. Dog-shops are tolerable. A cook-shop does not mingle the agreeable with the useful. We hate its panes with Ham and Beef scratched upon them in white letters. An ivory-turner's is pleasant, with its red and white chessmen, and little big-headed Indians on elephants. So is a toy-shop, with its endless delights for children. A coach-maker's is not disagreeable if you can see the painting and pannels. An umbrella-shop only reminds one of a rainy day, unless it is a shop for sticks also, which, as we showed last week, are meritorious articles. The curiosity-shop is sometimes very amusing, with its mandarins, stuffed birds, odd old carved faces, and a variety of things as indescribable as bits of dreams. The green-grocer carries his recommendation in his epithet. The hair-dressers are also interesting, as far as their hair goes, but not as their heads ; always bearing in mind that we



mean the heads in their windows. One of the shops we like least is an angling repository, with its rod for a sign, and a fish dancing in the agonies of death at the end of it. We really cannot see what equanimity there is in jerking a lacerated carp out of water by the jaws, merely because it has not the power of making a noise : for we presume that the most philosophic of anglers would hardly delight in catching shrieking fish. An optician's is not very amusing, unless it has those reflecting glasses in which you see your face run off on each side into attenuated width, or upwards and downwards in the same manner in dreary longitude. A sadler's is good, because it reminds one of horses. A Christian sword-maker's or gun-maker's is edifying. A glass-shop is a beautiful spectacle. It reminds one of the splendours of a fairy palace. We like a black-smith's for the sturdy looks and thumpings of the men, the swarthy colour, the fiery sparkles, and the thunder-breathing throat of the furnace. Of other houses of traffic, not common in the streets, there is something striking to us in the large well-conditioned horses of the brewers, and the rich smoke rolling from out their chimnies. We also greatly admire a wharf, with its boats, barrels, and packages, and the fresh air from the water ; not to mention the smell of pitch. It carries us at once a hundred miles over the water. For similar reasons, the crabbedest old lane has its merits in our eyes, if there is a sail-maker's in it, or a boat-builder's and water at the end.

## VI. TREES IN THE CITY

*Strange as it may seem, the tree at the corner of Wood Street (a large plane tree) and the ' little garden ' in Watling Street (close to St. Paul's Cathedral) are still to be seen, nearly a century after this passage was written. It is from Leigh Hunt's The Town (1848) ; but this part had appeared in 1834.*

THERE is scarcely a street in the city of London, perhaps not one, nor many out of the pale of it, from some part of which the passenger may not discern a tree. Most



persons to whom this has been mentioned have doubted the accuracy of our information, nor do we profess hitherto to have ascertained it; though since we heard the assertion, we have made a point of endeavouring to do so whenever we could, and have not been disappointed. The mention of the circumstance generally creates a laughing astonishment, and a cry of 'impossible!' Two persons, who successively heard of it the other day, not only thought it incredible as a general fact, but doubted whether half a dozen streets could be found with a twig in them; and they triumphantly instanced 'Cheapside,' as a place in which it was 'out of the question.' Yet in Cheapside is an actual, visible, and even ostentatiously visible tree, to all who have eyes to look about them. It stands at the corner of Wood Street, and occupies the space of a house. There was a solitary one the other day in St. Paul's Churchyard, which has now got a multitude of young companions. A little child was shown us a few years back, who was said never to have beheld a tree but that single one in St. Paul's Churchyard. Whenever a tree was mentioned, she thought it was that and no other. She had no conception even of the remote tree in Cheapside! This appears incredible; but there would seem to be no bounds, either to imagination or the want of it. We were told the other day, on good authority, of a man who had resided six-and-thirty years in the square of St. Peter's at Rome, and then for the first time went inside the Cathedral.

There is a little garden in *Watling Street*! It lies completely open to the eye, being divided from the footway by a railing only. . . .

A tree, or even a flower, put in a window, in the streets of a great city (and the London citizens, to their credit, are fond of flowers), affects the eye something in the same way as the hand-organs, which bring unexpected music to the ear. They refresh the common-places of life, shed a harmony through the busy discord, and appeal to those first sources of emotion, which are associated with the

remembrance of all that is young and innocent. They seem also to present to us a portion of the tranquillity we think we are labouring for, and the desire of which is felt as an earnest that we shall realize it somewhere, either in this world or the next. Above all, they render us more cheerful for the performance of present duties ; and the smallest seed of this kind, dropt into the heart of man, is worth more, and may terminate in better fruits, than anybody but a great poet could tell us.

## VII. HACKNEY-COACHES AND HANSOM-CABS

*From Dickens's Sketches by Boz (1836).*

WE maintain that hackney-coaches, properly so called, belong solely to the metropolis. We may be told, that there are hackney-coach stands in Edinburgh ; and not to go quite so far for a contradiction to our position, we may be reminded that Liverpool, Manchester, ' and other large towns ' (as the Parliamentary phrase goes), have *their* hackney-coach stands. We readily concede to these places, the possession of certain vehicles, which may look almost as dirty, and even go almost as slowly, as London hackney-coaches : but that they have the slightest claim to compete with the metropolis, either in point of stands, drivers, or cattle, we indignantly deny.

Take a regular, ponderous, rickety, London hackney-coach of the old school, and let any man have the boldness to assert, if he can, that he ever beheld any object on the face of the earth which at all resembles it, unless, indeed, it were another hackney-coach of the same date. We have recently observed on certain stands, and we say it with deep regret, rather dapper green chariots, and coaches of polished yellow, with four wheels of the same colour as the coach, whereas it is perfectly notorious to every one who has studied the subject, that every wheel ought to be of a different colour, and a different size. These are innovations, and, like other mis-called improvements, awful signs of the restlessness of the public mind,

and the little respect paid to our time-honoured institutions. Why should hackney-coaches be clean? Our ancestors found them dirty, and left them so. Why should we, with a feverish wish to 'keep moving,' desire to roll along at the rate of six miles an hour, while they were content to rumble over the stones at four? . . .

There is a hackney-coach stand under the very window at which we are writing; there is only one coach on it now, but it is a fair specimen of the class of vehicles to which we have alluded—a great, lumbering, square concern of a dingy yellow colour (like a bilious brunette), with very small glasses, but very large frames; the panels are ornamented with a faded coat of arms, in shape something like a dissected bat, the axletree is red, and the majority of the wheels are green. The box is partially covered by an old great-coat, with a multiplicity of capes, and some extraordinary-looking clothes; and the straw, with which the canvas cushion is stuffed, is sticking up in several places, as if in rivalry of the hay, which is peeping through the chinks in the boot. The horses, with drooping heads, and each with a mane and tail as scanty and straggling as those of a worn-out rocking-horse, are standing patiently on some damp straw, occasionally wincing, and rattling the harness; and, now and then, one of them lifts his mouth to the ear of his companion, as if he were saying, in a whisper, that he should like to assassinate the coachman. The coachman himself is in the watering-house; and the waterman, with his hands forced into his pockets as far as they can possibly go, is dancing the 'double shuffle,' in front of the pump, to keep his feet warm.

The servant-girl, with the pink ribbons, at No. 5, opposite, suddenly opens the street-door, and four small children forthwith rush out, and scream 'Coach!' with all their might and main. The waterman darts from the pump, seizes the horses by their respective bridles, and drags them, and the coach too, round to the house, shouting all the time for the coachman at the very top, or rather very bottom of his voice, for it is a deep bass growl.

A response is heard from the taproom ; the coachman, in his wooden-soled shoes, makes the street echo again as he runs across it ; and then there is such a struggling, and backing, and grating of the kennel, to get the coach-door opposite the house-door, that the children are in perfect ecstasies of delight. . . .

Talk of cabs ! Cabs are all very well in cases of expedition, when it's a matter of neck or nothing, life or death, your temporary home or your long one. But, beside a cab's lacking that gravity of deportment which so peculiarly distinguishes a hackney-coach, let it never be forgotten that a cab is a thing of yesterday, and that he never was anything better. A hackney-cab has always been a hackney-cab, from his first entry into public life ; whereas a hackney-coach is a remnant of past gentility, a victim to fashion, a hanger-on of an old English family, wearing their arms, and, in days of yore, escorted by men wearing their livery, stripped of his finery, and thrown upon the world, like a once-smart footman when he is no longer sufficiently juvenile for his office, progressing lower and lower in the scale of four-wheeled degradation, until at last it comes to—*a stand !*

## VIII. THE PRAISE OF CHIMNEY SWEEPERS

*The first Act to regulate chimney-sweeping was passed in 1789, the date of Blake's poem ; but the employment of small boys to clean chimneys (by climbing up inside them) was not prohibited till 1840. The extracts are from Lamb's Elia and Blake's Songs of Innocence.*

### I

I LIKE to meet a sweep—understand me—not a grown sweeper—old chimney-sweepers are by no means attractive—but one of those tender novices, blooming through their first nigritude, the maternal washings not quite effaced from the cheek—such as come forth with the dawn, or somewhat earlier, with their little professional notes sounding like the *peep peep* of a young sparrow ;

or liker to the matin lark should I pronounce them, in their aerial ascents not seldom anticipating the sun-rise ?

I have a kindly yearning towards these dim specks—poor blots—innocent blacknesses—

I reverence these young Africans of our own growth—these almost clergy imps, who sport their cloth without assumption ; and from their little pulpits (the tops of chimneys), in the nipping air of a December morning, preach a lesson of patience to mankind.

When a child, what a mysterious pleasure it was to witness their operation ! to see a chit no bigger than one's-self enter, one knew not by what process, into what seemed the *fauces Averni*—to pursue him in imagination, as he went sounding on through so many dark stifling caverns, horrid shades !—to shudder with the idea that 'now, surely, he must be lost for ever' !—to revive at hearing his feeble shout of discovered day-light—and then (O fulness of delight) running out of doors, to come just in time to see the sable phenomenon emerge in safety, the brandished weapon of his art victorious like some flag waved over a conquered citadel ! I seem to remember having been told, that a bad sweep was once left in a stack with his brush, to indicate which way the wind blew. It was an awful spectacle certainly ; not much unlike the old stage direction in *Macbeth*, where the 'Apparition of a child crowned with a tree in his hand rises.'

Reader, if thou meetest one of these small gentry in thy early rambles, it is good to give him a penny. It is better to give him two-pence. If it be starving weather, and to the proper troubles of his hard occupation, a pair of kibed heels (no unusual accompaniment) be superadded, the demand on thy humanity will surely rise to a tester. . . .

I am by nature extremely susceptible of street affronts ; the jeers and taunts of the populace ; the low-bred triumph they display over the casual trip, or splashed stocking, of a gentleman. Yet can I endure the jocularly of a young sweep, with something more than forgiveness.—In the last winter but one, pacing along Cheapside with my accus-

tomed precipitation when I walk westward, a treacherous slide brought me upon my back in an instant. I scrambled up with pain and shame enough—yet outwardly trying to face it down, as if nothing had happened—when the roguish grin of one of these young wits encountered me. There he stood, pointing me out with his dusky finger to the mob, and to a poor woman (I suppose his mother) in particular, till the tears for the exquisiteness of the fun (so he thought it) worked themselves out at the corners of his poor red eyes, red from many a previous weeping, and soot-inflamed, yet twinkling through all with such a joy, snatched out of desolation, that Hogarth—but Hogarth has got him already (how could he miss him ?) in the March to Finchley, grinning at the pye-man—there he stood, as he stands in the picture, irremovable, as if the jest was to last for ever—with such a maximum of glee, and minimum of mischief, in his mirth—for the grin of a genuine sweep hath absolutely no malice in it—that I could have been content, if the honour of a gentleman might endure it, to have remained his butt and his mockery till midnight.

## II

WHEN my mother died I was very young,  
And my father sold me while yet my tongue  
Could scarcely cry ‘weep! weep! weep! weep!’  
So your chimneys I sweep, and in soot I sleep.

There’s little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head,  
That curl’d like a lamb’s back, was shav’d; so I said  
‘Hush, Tom! never mind it, for when your head’s bare  
You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair.’

And so he was quiet, and that very night,  
As Tom was a-sleeping, he had such a sight!— 10  
That thousands of sweepers, Dick, Joe, Ned, and Jack,  
Were all of them lock’d up in coffins of black.



And by came an Angel who had a bright key,  
 And he open'd the coffins and set them all free ;  
 Then down a green plain leaping, laughing, they run,  
 And wash in a river, and shine in the sun.

Then naked and white, all their bags left behind,  
 They rise upon clouds and sport in the wind ;  
 And the Angel told Tom, if he'd be a good boy,  
 He'd have God for his father, and never want joy. 20

And so Tom awoke ; and we rose in the dark,  
 And got with our bags and our brushes to work.  
 Tho' the morning was cold, Tom was happy and warm ;  
 So if all do their duty they need not fear harm.

## IX. WATCHMEN

*From an essay by Leigh Hunt in The Companion, February 6, 1820.  
 —The modern police force of London, instituted by Sir Robert Peel,  
 superseded (in 1829) the watchmen, who were a sort of 'amateur police',  
 on duty only at night.*

WE do not pity the watchmen as we used. Old age often cares little for regular sleep. They could not be sleeping, perhaps, if they were in their beds ; and certainly they would not be earning. What sleep they get, is perhaps sweeter in the watchbox,—a forbidden sweet ; and they have a sense of importance, and a claim on the persons indoors, which together with the amplitude of their coating and the possession of the box itself, make them feel themselves, not without reason, to be 'somebody.' They are peculiar and official. Tomkins is a cobbler as well as they ; but then he is no watchman. He cannot speak to 'things of night' ; nor bid 'any man stand in the King's name.' He does not get fees and gratitude from the old, the infirm, and the drunken ; nor 'let gentlemen go' ; nor is he 'a parish-man.' The churchwardens don't speak to him. If he put himself ever so much in the way of 'the great plumber,' he would not say 'How do

you find yourself, Tomkins ? ’—‘ An ancient and quiet watchman.’ Such he was in the time of Shakespeare, and such he is now. Ancient, because he cannot help it ; and quiet, because he will not help it, if possible ; his object being to procure quiet on all sides, his own included. For this reason, he does not make too much noise in crying the hour, nor is offensively particular in his articulation. No man shall sleep the worse for him, out of a horrid sense of the word ‘ three.’ The sound shall be three, or four, or one, as suits their mutual convenience. . . .

Of characters, or rather varieties among watchmen, we remember several. One was a Dandy Watchman, who used to ply at the top of Oxford Street, next the park. We called him the dandy, on account of his utterance. He had a mincing way with it, pronouncing the *a* in the word ‘ past ’ as it is in *hat*,—making a little preparatory hem before he spoke, and then bringing out his ‘ Past ten ’ in a style of genteel indifference, as if, upon the whole, he was of that opinion.

Another was the Metallic Watchman, who paced the same street towards Hanover Square, and had a clang in his voice like a trumpet. He was a voice and nothing else ; but any difference is something in a watchman.

A third, who cried the hour in Bedford Square, was remarkable in his calling for being abrupt and loud. There was a fashion among his tribe just come up at that time, of omitting the words ‘ Past ’ and ‘ o’clock,’ and crying only the number of the hour. I do not know whether a recollection I have of his performance one night is entire matter of fact, or whether any subsequent fancies of what might have taken place are mixed up with it ; but my impression is, that as I was turning the corner into the square with a friend, and was in the midst of a discussion in which numbers were concerned, we were suddenly startled, as if in solution of it, by a brief and tremendous outcry of—  
ONE. . . .

A fourth watchman was a very singular phenomenon, a *Reading* Watchman. He had a book, which he read

by the light of his lantern; and instead of a pleasant, gave you a very uncomfortable idea of him. It seemed cruel to pitch amidst so many discomforts and privations one who had imagination enough to wish to be relieved from them. Nothing but a sluggish vacuity befits a watchman.

## X. LETTERS AND THE POSTMAN

*From 'The Letter-Bell', an essay by Hazlitt in the Monthly Magazine for March 1831.*

As I write this, the *Letter-Bell* passes: it has a lively, pleasant sound with it, and not only fills the street with its importunate clamour, but rings clear through the length of many half-forgotten years. It strikes upon the ear, it vibrates to the brain, it wakes me from the dream of time, it flings me back upon my first entrance into life, the period of my first coming up to town, when all around was strange, uncertain, adverse—a hubbub of confused noises, a chaos of shifting objects—and when this sound alone, startling me with the recollection of a letter I had to send to the friends I had lately left, brought me as it were to myself, made me feel that I had links still connecting me with the universe, and gave me hope and patience to persevere. . . . How often have I put off writing a letter till it was too late! How often had to run after the postman with it—now missing, now recovering, the sound of his bell—breathless, angry with myself—then hearing the welcome sound come full round a corner—and seeing the scarlet costume which set all my fears and self-reproaches at rest! I do not recollect having ever repented giving a letter to the postman or wishing to retrieve it after he had once deposited it in his bag. What I have once set my hand to, I take the consequences of, and have been always pretty much of the same humour in this respect. I am not like the person who, having sent off a letter to his mistress, who resided a hundred and twenty miles in the country, and disapproving, on second

thoughts, of some expressions contained in it, took a post-chaise and four to follow and intercept it the next morning. . . .

The dustman's-bell, with its heavy, monotonous noise, and the brisk, lively tinkle of the muffin-bell, have something in them, but not much. . . . The postman's double-knock at the door the next morning is 'more german to the matter.' How that knock often goes to the heart ! We distinguish to a nicety the arrival of the Two-penny or the General Post. The summons of the latter is louder and heavier, as bringing news from a greater distance, and as, the longer it has been delayed, fraught with a deeper interest. We catch the sound of what is to be paid—eight-pence, nine-pence, a shilling—and our hopes generally rise with the postage. How we are provoked at the delay in getting change—at the servant who does not hear the door ! Then if the postman passes, and we do not hear the expected knock, what a pang is there ! It is like the silence of death—of hope ! We think he does it on purpose, and enjoys all the misery of our suspense. I have sometimes walked out to see the Mail-Coach pass, by which I had sent a letter, or to meet it when I expected one. I never see a Mail-Coach, for this reason, but I look at it as the bearer of glad tidings—the messenger of fate. I have reason to say so.—The finest sight in the metropolis is that of the Mail-Coaches setting off from Piccadilly. The horses paw the ground, and are impatient to be gone, as if conscious of the precious burden they convey. There is a peculiar secresy and despatch, significant and full of meaning, in all the proceedings concerning them. Even the outside passengers have an erect and supercilious air, as if proof against the accidents of the journey. In fact, it seems indifferent whether they are to encounter the summer's heat or winter's cold, since they are borne through the air in a winged chariot. The Mail-Carts drive up ; the transfer of packages is made ; and, at a signal given, they start off, bearing the irrevocable scrolls that give wings to thought, and that bind or sever hearts

for ever. How we hate the Putney and Brentford stages that draw up in a line after they are gone !

## XI. HYDE PARK ON SUNDAYS

*An entertaining piece of description from Henry Luttrell's Letters to Julia (1822).*

SEE how the universal throng,  
 Borne in one swelling tide along,  
 Crowds to its turf-clad altars, there  
 To beg the blessing of fresh air !  
 Throughout the week, but most on one day  
 Enjoyed beyond all others—Sunday,  
 With many a mutual pinch and shove,  
 To Hyde-Park-Corner on they move,  
 Like bees, that, when the weather's warm,  
 Grow weary of their hives and swarm. . . . 10  
 Here mingle, in one mass confounded,  
 All shapes, all sizes, slim, and rounded,  
 With all imaginable features  
 That e'er distinguished human creatures.  
 Nor less their habits disagree :  
 Some have, at sunset, risen from tea ;  
 Some linger on, till Dusk, at nine,  
 Bids them retire to dress and dine.  
 The same delights together jumble  
 The rich and poor, the proud and humble. . . . 20  
 But O ! the treachery of our weather,  
 When Sunday-folks are met together !  
 Its tempting brightness scarce matured,  
 How suddenly the day's obscured !  
 Bless me, how dark !—Thou threatening cloud,  
 Pity the *un-umbrella'd* crowd.  
 The cloud rolls onward with the breeze.  
 First, pattering on the distant trees  
 The rain-drops fall—then quicker, denser,  
 On many a parasol and spencer ; 30

Soon drenching, with no mercy on it,  
 The straw and silk of many a bonnet.  
 Think of their hapless owners fretting,  
 While feathers, crape, and gauze are wetting !  
 Think of the pang to well-dressed girls,  
 When, pinch'd in vain, their hair uncurls,  
 And ringlets from each lovely pate  
 Hang mathematically straight !  
 As off, on every side, they scour,  
 Still beats the persecuting shower,  
 Till, on the thirsty gravel smoking,  
 It fairly earns the name of soaking.  
 Breathless, they scud ; some helter-skelter  
 To carriages, and some for shelter ;  
 Lispering to coachmen drunk or dumb  
 In *numbers*—while no numbers come.  
 Some in their clinging clothes so lank,  
 Others so bouncing, all so blank,  
 With sarsnets stained, with stockings splashed,  
 With muslins prematurely washed,  
 Enraged, resigned, in tears, or frowning,  
 Look as if just escaped from drowning ;  
 While anxious thoughts pursue them home,  
 Whence their next Sunday-dress must come.

## XII. THE END OF THE LONDON 'SEASON'

*A characteristic specimen of vers de société by W. M. Praed ; dated August, 1827.*

GOOD night to the Season ! 'Tis over !  
 Gay dwellings no longer are gay ;  
 The courtier, the gambler, the lover,  
 Are scattered like swallows away :  
 There's nobody left to invite one  
 Except my good uncle and spouse ;  
 My mistress is bathing at Brighton,  
 My patron is sailing at Cowes. . . .



Good night to the Season!—the dances,  
 The fillings of hot little rooms, 10  
 The glancings of rapturous glances,  
 The fancyings of fancy costumes;  
 The pleasures which fashion makes duties,  
 The praisings of fiddles and flutes,  
 The luxury of looking at Beauties,  
 The tedium of talking to mutes. . . .

Good night to the Season!—Another  
 Will come, with its trifles and toys,  
 And hurry away, like its brother,  
 In sunshine, and odour, and noise. 20  
 Will it come with a rose or a briar?  
 Will it come with a blessing or curse?  
 Will its bonnets be lower or higher?  
 Will its morals be better or worse?  
 Will it find me grown thinner or fatter,  
 Or fonder of wrong or of right,  
 Or married—or buried?—no matter:  
 Good night to the Season—good night!

### XIII. TO MARGATE BY STEAMER IN AUGUST

*The first workable steamboat appeared in 1802. By 1814 there were five steamboats on the Thames; and soon the daily service from London to Margate, already a popular health and pleasure resort, was an established attraction during the summer months, as these lines from Luttrell's Letters to Julia (1822) show.*

Now many a city-wife and daughter  
 Feels that the dipping-rage has caught her.  
 Scarce can they rest upon their pillows,  
 For musing on machines and billows;  
 Or, should they slumber, 'tis to dream  
 All night of Margate and of steam;  
 Of Steam, much stronger than a giant,  
 And, duly conjured, more compliant.

At eight, that bustling happy hour,  
 His boat is ready at the Tower. 10  
 Embarked, they catch the sound, and feel  
 The thumping motion of his wheel,  
 Lashed into foam by ceaseless strokes,  
 The river roars, the funnel smokes,  
 As onward, like an arrow, shoots  
 The Giant, with the seven-league boots,  
 Plying his paddles, and outstripping  
 With ease the sails of all the shipping  
 Through every reach—mast following mast  
 Descried, approached, o’ertaken, passed. . . . 20  
 While on the deck some stretch their legs,  
 Some feast below on toast and eggs,  
 Cheered by the clarinet and song,  
 Ten knots an hour they spank along,  
 By Gravesend, Southend, through the Nore,  
 Till the boat lands them all at four,  
 Exulting, on the Margate-shore !

#### XIV. GEORGE III AND THE LOYALTY OF WEYMOUTH

*A letter from the diarist Fanny Burney to her father, July 13, 1789.—Weymouth was George III's favourite watering-place, and was for long a serious rival to Brighton, which was preferred by his son, the future Prince Regent and George IV.*

THE bay here is most beautiful ; the sea never rough, generally calm and gentle, and the sands perfectly smooth and pleasant. . . . His Majesty is in delightful health, and much-improved spirits. All agree he never looked better. The loyalty of all this place is excessive ; they have dressed out every street with labels of ‘ God save the King ’ : all the shops have it over the doors ; all the children wear it in their caps, all the labourers in their hats, and all the sailors *in their voices*, for they never approach the house without shouting it aloud, nor see the King, or his shadow, without beginning to huzza, and going on to three cheers.

The bathing-machines make it their motto over all their windows ; and those bathers that belong to the royal dippers wear it in bandeaus on their bonnets, to go into the sea ; and have it again, in large letters, round their waists, to encounter the waves. Flannel dresses, tucked up, and no shoes nor stockings, with bandeaus and girdles, have a most singular appearance ; and when first I surveyed these loyal nymphs it was with some difficulty I kept my features in order.

Nor is this all. Think but of the surprise of His Majesty when, the first time of his bathing, he had no sooner popped his royal head under water than a band of music, concealed in a neighbouring machine, struck up ‘ God save great George our King.’

One thing, however, was a little unlucky ;—when the Mayor and burgesses came with the address, they requested leave to kiss hands : this was graciously accorded ; but, the Mayor advancing, in a common way, *to take the Queen’s hand*, as he might that of any lady mayoress, Colonel Gwynn, who stood by, whispered, ‘ You must kneel, sir ! ’ He found, however, that he took no notice of this hint, but kissed the Queen’s hand erect. As he passed him, in his way back, the Colonel said, ‘ You should have knelt, sir ! ’

‘ Sir,’ answered the poor Mayor, ‘ I cannot.’

‘ Everybody does, sir.’

‘ Sir,—I have a wooden leg ! ’

Poor man ! ’twas such a surprise ! and such an excuse as no one could dispute.

But the absurdity of the matter followed ;—all the rest did the same ; taking the same privilege, by the example, without the same or any cause !

## XV. BRIGHTON AND ITS ‘ KREMLIN ’

*From Rural Rides.*—Cobbett was a good hater ; and among his hates may be reckoned all large towns, the Tory Government and most of its concerns, and the Prince Regent and most of his. The Regent, now King George IV, had spent much time since his coming-of-age in

1783 at the then small fishing-town of Brighthelmstone, which under his patronage became a prosperous and fashionable resort, and contracted its name to Brighton. Here, too, he built and lived in the 'Kremlin', an extravagant example of the sham-oriental style, which (now known as the 'Pavilion') is still one of the odder sights of the town.

Brighton, January 10, 1822. From Lewes to Brighton the road winds along between the hills of the South Downs, which, in this mild weather, are mostly beautifully green even at this season, with flocks of sheep feeding on them. —Brighton itself lies in a valley cut across at one end by the sea, and its extension, or *Wen*, has swelled up the sides of the hills and has run some distance up the valley.—The first thing you see in approaching Brighton from Lewes, is a splendid *horse-barrack* on one side of the road, and a heap of low, shabby, nasty houses, irregularly built, on the other side. This is always the case where there is a barrack. How soon a Reformed Parliament would make both disappear! Brighton is a very pleasant place. For a *wen* remarkably so. The *Kremlin*, the very name of which has so long been a subject of laughter all over the country, lies in the gorge of the valley, and amongst the old houses of the town. The grounds, which cannot, I think, exceed a couple or three acres, are surrounded by a wall neither lofty nor good-looking. Above this rise some trees, bad in sorts, stunted in growth, and dirty with smoke. As to the 'palace' as the Brighton newspapers call it, the apartments appear to be all upon the ground floor; and, when you see the thing from a distance, you think you see a parcel of *cradle-spits*, of various dimensions, sticking up out of the mouths of so many enormous squat decanters. Take a square box, the sides of which are three feet and a half, and the height a foot and a half. Take a large Norfolk-turnip, cut off the green of the leaves, leave the stalks 9 inches long, tie these round with a string three inches from the top, and put the turnip on the middle of the top of the box. Then take four turnips of half the size, treat them in the same way,

and put them on the corners of the box. Then take a considerable number of bulbs of the crown-imperial, the narcissus, the hyacinth, the tulip, the crocus, and others ; let the leaves of each have sprouted to about an inch, more or less according to the size of the bulb ; put all these, pretty promiscuously, but pretty thickly, on the top of the box. Then stand off and look at your architecture. There ! That's '*a Kremlin*' ! Only you must cut some church-looking windows in the sides of the box. As to what you ought to put *into* the box, that is a subject far above my cut.—Brighton is naturally a place of resort for *expectants*, and a shifty ugly-looking swarm is, of course, assembled here. . . . You may always know them by their lank jaws, the stiffeners round their necks, their hidden or *no* shirts, their stays, their false shoulders, hips and haunches, their half-whiskers, and by their skins, colour of veal kidney-suet, warmed a little, and then powdered with dirty dust.—These vermin excepted, the people at Brighton make a very fine figure. The tradespeople are very nice in all their concerns. The houses are excellent, built chiefly with a blue or purple brick ; and bow-windows appear to be the general taste. I can easily believe this to be a very healthy place : the open downs on the one side and the open sea on the other. No inlet, cove, or river ; and, of course, no swamps.

## XVI. A YOUNG LADY'S FIRST VISIT TO BATH

*A scene from Jane Austen's novel Northanger Abbey, written in 1798. Catherine Morland, aged seventeen, visits the fashionable watering-place with her married friend Mrs. Allen, and meets Mr. Henry Tilney, a young clergyman.*

THEY arrived at Bath. Catherine was all eager delight ;—her eyes were here, there, every where, as they approached its fine and striking environs, and afterwards drove through those streets which conducted them to the hotel. She was come to be happy, and she felt happy already. . . .

Every morning now brought its regular duties ;—shops

were to be visited ; some new part of the town to be looked at ; and the Pump Room to be attended, where they paraded up and down for an hour, looking at every body and speaking to no one. The wish of a numerous acquaintance in Bath was still uppermost with Mrs. Allen, and she repeated it after every proof, which every morning brought, of her knowing nobody at all.

They made their appearance in the Lower Rooms, and here fortune was more favourable to our heroine. The master of the ceremonies introduced to her a very gentlemanlike young man as a partner ;—his name was Tilney. He seemed to be about four or five and twenty, was rather tall, had a pleasing countenance, a very intelligent and lively eye, and if not quite handsome, was very near it. His address was good, and Catherine felt herself in high luck. There was little leisure for speaking while they danced ; but when they were seated at tea, she found him as agreeable as she had already given him credit for being. He talked with fluency and spirit—and there was an archness and pleasantness in his manner which interested, though it was hardly understood by her. After chatting some time on such matters as naturally arose from the objects around them, he suddenly addressed her with —‘I have hitherto been very remiss, madam, in the proper attentions of a partner here ; I have not yet asked you how long you have been in Bath ; whether you were ever here before ; whether you have been at the Upper Rooms, the theatre, and the concert ; and how you like the place altogether. I have been very negligent—but are you now at leisure to satisfy me in these particulars ? If you are, I will begin directly.’

‘You need not give yourself that trouble, sir.’

‘No trouble, I assure you, madam.’ Then forming his features into a set smile, and affectedly softening his voice, he added, with a simpering air, ‘Have you been long in Bath, madam ?’

‘About a week, sir,’ replied Catherine, trying not to laugh.



‘Really!’ with affected astonishment.

‘Why should you be surprized, sir?’

‘Why, indeed!’ said he, in his natural tone—‘but some emotion must appear to be raised by your reply, and surprise is more easily assumed and not less reasonable than any other.—Now let us go on. Were you never here before, madam?’

‘Never, sir.’

‘Indeed! Have you yet honoured the Upper Rooms?’

‘Yes, sir, I was there last Monday.’

‘Have you been to the theatre?’

‘Yes, sir; I was at the play on Tuesday.’

‘To the concert?’

‘Yes, sir; on Wednesday.’

‘And are you altogether pleased with Bath?’

‘Yes—I like it very well.’

‘Now, I must give one smirk, and then we may be rational again.’

Catherine turned away her head, not knowing whether she might venture to laugh.

‘I see what you think of me,’ said he gravely—‘I shall make but a poor figure in your journal to-morrow.’

‘My journal!’

‘Yes; I know exactly what you will say: Friday, went to the Lower Rooms; wore my sprigged muslin robe with blue trimmings—plain black shoes—appeared to much advantage, but was strangely harassed by a queer, half-witted man, who would make me dance with him, and distressed me by his nonsense.’

‘Indeed I shall say no such thing.’

‘Shall I tell you what you ought to say?’

‘If you please.’

‘I danced with a very agreeable young man, introduced by Mr. King—had a great deal of conversation with him—seems a most extraordinary genius—hope I may know more of him. *That*, madam, is what I *wish* you to say.’

‘But, perhaps, I keep no journal.’

‘Perhaps you are not sitting in this room, and I am not

sitting by you. These are points in which a doubt is equally possible. Not keep a journal! How are your absent cousins to understand the tenour of your life in Bath without one? How are the civilities and compliments of every day to be related as they ought to be, unless noted down every evening in a journal? How are your various dresses to be remembered, and the particular state of your complexion and curl of your hair to be described, in all their diversities, without having constant recourse to a journal?—My dear madam, I am not so ignorant of young ladies' ways as you wish to believe me.'



## SECTION NINE

### THE THEATRE: PLAYERS AND PLAYGOERS

#### I. LOVE OF THE THEATRE

##### I

*Hazlitt on 'The Drama', in The London Magazine, January 1820.*

WE do not much like any person or persons who do not like plays ; and for this reason, viz. that we imagine they cannot much like themselves or any one else. The really humane man (except in cases of unaccountable prejudices, which we do not think the most likely means to increase or preserve the natural amiableness of his disposition) is prone to the study of humanity. . . . He likes to see it brought home from the universality of precepts and general terms, to the reality of persons, of tones, and actions ; and to have it raised from the grossness and familiarity of sense, to the lofty but striking platform of the imagination. He likes to see the face of man with the veil of time torn from it, and to feel the pulse of nature beating in all times and places alike. The smile of good-humoured surprise at folly, the tear of pity at misfortune, do not misbecome the face of man or woman. It is something delightful and instructive, to have seen Coriolanus or King John in the habiliments of Mr. Kemble, to have shaken hands almost with Othello in the person of Mr. Kean, to have cowered before the spirit of Lady Macbeth in the glance of Mrs. Siddons.

## II

*In Book VII of The Prelude, his poetic autobiography, Wordsworth (writing in 1804) recalls his stay in London in 1791, as a young man.*

—YET was the theatre my dear delight ;  
 The very gilding, lamps and painted scrolls,  
 And all the mean upholstery of the place,  
 Wanted not animation, when the tide  
 Of pleasure ebbed but to return as fast  
 With the ever-shifting figures of the scene,  
 Solemn or gay ; whether some beauteous dame  
 Advanced in radiance through a deep recess  
 Of thick entangled forest, like the moon  
 Opening the clouds ; or sovereign king, announced 10  
 With flourishing trumpet, came in full-blown state  
 Of the world's greatness, winding round with train  
 Of courtiers, banners, and a length of guards ;  
 Or captive led in abject weeds, and jingling  
 His slender manacles ; or romping girl  
 Bounced, leapt, and pawed the air. . . .

—Enchanting age and sweet !  
 Romantic almost, looked at through a space  
 How small, of intervening years ! For then,  
 Though surely no mean progress had been made 20  
 In meditations holy and sublime,  
 Yet something of a girlish child-like gloss  
 Of novelty survived for scenes like these ;  
 Enjoyment haply handed down from times  
 When at a country-playhouse, some rude barn  
 Tricked out for that proud use, if I perchance  
 Caught, on a summer evening through a chink  
 In the old wall, an unexpected glimpse  
 Of daylight, the bare thought of where I was  
 Gladdened me more than if I had been led  
 Into a dazzling cavern of romance. 30

## II. STROLLING PLAYERS

## I

*Written about 1800, this passage from Thomas Holcroft's Memoirs records his actual experiences as an actor in a touring company. Holcroft, who began life as a stable-boy, wrote a once-popular melodrama, 'The Road to Ruin', and was notorious for his advanced political views, having been indicted for high treason during the anti-revolution panic of 1794.*

A COMPANY of travelling comedians is a small kingdom, of which the manager is the monarch. Their code of laws seems to have existed with few material variations since the days of Shakespeare, who is, with great reason, the god of their idolatry.—The person who is rich enough to furnish a wardrobe and scenes, commences manager, and has his privileges accordingly : if there are twenty persons in the company, for instance, the manager included, the receipts of the house, after all incidental expenses are deducted, are divided into four and twenty shares, four of which are called *dead* shares, and taken by the manager as payment for the use of his dresses and scenes ; to these is added the share to which he is entitled as a performer. Our manager (Stanton) has five sons and daughters all ranked as performers ; so that he sweeps eleven shares, that is, near half the profits of the theatre, into his pocket every night. This is a continual subject of discontent to the rest of the actors, who are all, to a man, disaffected to the higher powers. They are, however, most of them in debt to the manager, and of course chained to his galley ; a circumstance which he does not fail to remind them of, whenever they are refractory.

They appear to be a set of merry, thoughtless beings, who laugh in the midst of poverty, and who never want a quotation or a story to recruit their spirits. When they get any money, they seem in haste to spend it, lest some tyrant, in the shape of a dun, should snatch it from them. They have a circuit or set of towns, to which they resort when the time comes round ; so that there are but three



or four in our company who are not well known in \*\*\*\*\*.  
I observe that the townspeople are continually railing  
at them : yet are exceedingly unhappy, if they fail to  
return at the appointed time.

## II

*From Crabbe's Borough (1810).*

DRAWN by the annual call, we now behold  
Our troop dramatic, heroes known of old,  
And those, since last they march'd, inlisted and enroll'd :  
Mounted on hacks or borne in waggons some,  
The rest on foot (the humbler brethren) come. . . .

Peruse these bills, and see what each can do,—  
Behold ! the prince, the slave, the monk, the Jew ;  
Change but the garment, and they'll all engage  
To take each part, and act in every age :  
Cull'd from all houses, what a house are they ! 10  
Swept from all barns, our borough-critics say ;  
But with some portion of a critic's ire,  
We all endure them ; there are some admire ;  
They might have praise, confined to farce alone ;  
Full well they grin, they should not try to groan ;  
But then our servants' and our seamen's wives  
Love all that rant and rapture as their lives ;  
He who 'Squire Richard's part could well sustain,  
Finds as King Richard he must roar amain—  
'My horse ! my horse !'—Lo ! now to their abodes, 20  
Come lords and lovers, empresses and gods.  
The master-mover of these scenes has made  
No trifling gain in this adventurous trade ;  
Trade we may term it, for he duly buys  
Arms out of use and undirected eyes ;  
These he instructs, and guides them as he can,  
And vends each night the manufactured man :  
Long as our custom lasts, they gladly stay,  
Then strike their tents, like Tartars ! and away ! . . .

Sad happy race ! soon raised and soon depress'd,    30  
Your days all pass'd in jeopardy and jest ;  
Poor without prudence, with afflictions vain,  
Not warn'd by misery, not enrich'd by gain ;  
Whom justice pitying, chides from place to place,  
A wandering, careless, wretched, merry race.

### III. A LITTLE GIRL'S FIRST VISIT TO THE THEATRE

*Charles Lamb's* Elia essay, 'My First Play', is so well known that it may be more useful to give instead the reminiscences of his sister Mary, in Mrs. Leicester's School (1809), a collection of stories for children. She puts the account in the mouth of an imaginary little girl, Emily Barton ; but it probably gives her own memories of a performance of Congreve's tragedy 'The Mourning Bride' (1697), followed, as was then usual, by a short comic piece—sometimes, as here, a 'Harlequinade', sometimes a broad farce like Charles Lamb's Mr. H——.

I SHALL never forget how delighted I was at the first sight of the house. My little friend and I were placed together in the front, while our mammas retired to the back part of the box to chat by themselves, for they had been so kind as to come very early, that I might look about me before the performance began.

Frederica had been very often at a play. She was very useful in telling me what every thing was. She made me observe how the common people were coming bustling down the benches in the galleries, as if they were afraid they should lose their places. She told me what a crowd these poor people had to go through, before they got into the house. Then she shewed me how leisurely they all came into the pit, and looked about them, before they took their seats. She gave me a charming description of the king and queen at the play, and shewed me where they sate, and told me how the princesses were drest. It was a pretty sight to see the remainder of the candles lighted ; and so it was to see the musicians come up from under the stage. I admired the music very much, and I

asked if that was the play. Frederica laughed at my ignorance, and then she told me, when the play began, the green curtain would draw up to the sound of soft music, and I should hear a lady dressed in black say,

Music hath charms to soothe a savage breast :

and those were the very first words the actress, whose name was Almeria, spoke. When the curtain began to draw up, and I saw the bottom of her black petticoat, and heard the soft music, what an agitation I was in ! But before that we had long to wait. Frederica told me we should wait till all the dress boxes were full, and then the lights would pop up under the orchestra ; the second music would play, and then the play would begin.

The play was the Mourning Bride. It was a very moving tragedy ; and after that when the curtain dropt, and I thought it was all over, I saw the most diverting pantomime that ever was seen. I made a strange blunder the next day, for I told papa that Almeria was married to Harlequin at last ; but I assure you I meant to say Columbine, for I knew very well that Almeria was married to Alphonso ; for she said she was in the first scene. She thought he was dead, but she found him again, just as I did my papa and mamma, when she least expected it.

#### IV. THE IMPROVEMENT OF MANNERS IN THE THEATRE

*This passage from Leigh Hunt's The Town was written about 1833. The quotation is from Pope's imitation of Horace's Epistles, II, 1.*

THE whole entertainment of a theatre has been rising in point of accommodation and propriety for the last fifty years. The scenery is better, the music better—we mean the orchestra—and last, not least, the audiences are better. They are better behaved. Garrick put an end to one great nuisance—the occupation, by the audience, of part of the stage. Till his time, people often sate about a stage as

at the sides of a room, and the actor had to make his way among them, sometimes with the chance of being insulted ; and scuffles took place among themselves. Dr. Johnson, at Lichfield, is said to have pushed a man into the orchestra who had taken possession of his chair. The pit, also, from about Garrick's time, seems to have left to the galleries the vulgarity attributed to it by Pope. There still remains, says he—

—‘to mortify a wit,

The many-headed monster of the pit,  
A senseless, worthless, and unhonoured crowd,  
Who, to disturb their betters mighty proud,  
Clattering their sticks before ten lines are spoke,  
Call for the farce, the bear, or the black-joke.’

This would now be hardly a fair description of the galleries ; and yet modern audiences are not reckoned to be of quite so high a cast as they used, in point of rank and wealth ; so that this is another evidence of the general improvement of manners. Boswell, in an ebullition of vivacity, while sitting one night in the pit by his friend Dr. Blair, gave an extempore imitation of a cow ! The house applauded, and he ventured upon some attempts of the same kind which did not succeed. Blair advised him in future to ‘stick to the cow.’ No gentleman now-a-days would think of a freak like this. There is one thing, however, in which the pit have much to amend. Their destitution of gallantry is extraordinary, especially for a body so ready to accept the clap-traps of the stage, in praise of their ‘manly hearts,’ and their ‘guardianship of the fair.’ Nothing is more common than to see women standing at the sides of the pit benches, while no one thinks of offering them a seat. Room even is not made, though it often might be. Nay, we have heard women rebuked for coming without securing a seat, while the reprover complimented himself on his better wisdom, and the hearers laughed. On the other hand, a considerate gentleman one night, who went out to stretch his legs,

told a lady in our hearing that she might occupy his seat 'till he returned'!

## V. THREE GREAT ACTORS: KEAN, KEMBLE, AND MRS. SIDDONS

*Garrick died in 1779, and during the next thirty years the Kemble family held the pre-eminence. Charles, the younger son, excelled in comedy; but his brother and sister, John Philip and Sarah (Mrs. Siddons), were in the first rank of tragic actors. They maintained the 'classical' or declamatory style of Garrick, which differed considerably from the more naturalistic manner of Edmund Kean, who came into prominence in 1814.—This passage, by Hazlitt, comes from the same article as the first extract in this section.*

To show that we do not conceive that tragedy regularly declines in every successive generation, we shall say, that we do not think there has been in our remembrance any tragic performer (with the exception of Mrs. Siddons) equal to Mr. Kean. Nor, except in voice and person, and the conscious ease and dignity naturally resulting from those advantages, do we know that even Mrs. Siddons was greater. In truth of nature and force of passion, in discrimination and originality, we see no inferiority to any one on the part of Mr. Kean: but there is an insignificance of figure, and a hoarseness of voice, that necessarily *vulgarize*, or diminish our idea of the characters he plays: and perhaps to this may be added, a want of a certain correspondent elevation and magnitude of thought, of which Mrs. Siddons's noble form seemed to be only the natural mould and receptacle. Her nature seemed always above the circumstances with which she had to struggle: her soul to be greater than the passion labouring in her breast. Grandeur was the cradle in which her genius was rocked: for *her* to be, was to be sublime! She did the greatest things with child-like ease: her powers seemed never tasked to the utmost, and always as if she had inexhaustible resources still in reserve. The least word she uttered seemed to float to the end of the stage: the least motion of her hand seemed to command awe and obedience.

Mr. Kean is all effort, all violence, all extreme passion : he is possessed with a fury, a demon that leaves him no repose, no time for thought, or room for imagination. He perhaps screws himself up to as intense a degree of feeling as Mrs. Siddons, strikes home with as sure and as hard a blow as she did, but he does this by straining every nerve, and winding up every faculty to this single point alone : and as he does it by an effort himself, the spectator follows him by an effort also. Our sympathy in a manner ceases with the actual impression, and does not leave the same grand and permanent image of itself behind. The Othello furnishes almost the only exception to these remarks. The solemn and beautiful manner in which he pronounces the farewell soliloquy, is worth all gladiatorship and pantomime in the world. His Sir Giles [i.e., Overreach in Massinger's *New Way to Pay Old Debts*] is his most equal and energetic character : but it is too equal, too energetic from the beginning to the end. . . . Cooke played the general casting of the character better in this respect : but without the same fine breaks and turns of passion. Cooke indeed, compared to Kean, had only the *slang* and *bravado* of tragedy. Neither can we think Mr. Kemble equal to him, with all his study, his grace, and classic dignity of form. He was the statue of perfect tragedy, not the living soul. Mrs. Siddons combined the advantage of form and other organic requisites, with nature and passion : Mr. Kemble has the external requisites (at least of face and figure), without the internal workings of the soul : Mr. Kean has the last without the first, and, if we must make our election between the two, we think the *vis tragica* must take precedence of every thing else. Mr. Kean, in a word, appears to us a test, an *experimentum crucis*, to shew the triumph of genius over physical defects, of nature over art, of passion over affectation, and of originality over common-place monotony.



## VI. KEMBLE AS CHARLES SURFACE

*From Elia (1823).—Lamb first saw his favourite J. P. Kemble in Sheridan's 'School for Scandal' about 1790. Not many seem to have agreed with Lamb in his high opinion of Kemble as an actor in comedy.*

No piece was, perhaps, ever so completely cast in all its parts as this *manager's comedy*. Miss Farren had succeeded to Mrs. Abingdon in *Lady Teazle*; and Smith, the original Charles, had retired, when I first saw it. The rest of the characters, with very slight exceptions, remained. I remember it was then the fashion to cry down John Kemble, who took the part of Charles after Smith; but, I thought, very unjustly. Smith, I fancy, was more airy, and took the eye with a certain gaiety of person. He brought with him no sombre recollections of tragedy. He had not to expiate the fault of having pleased beforehand in lofty declamation. He had no sins of Hamlet or of Richard to atone for. His failure in these parts was a passport to success in one of so opposite a tendency. But, as far as I could judge, the weighty sense of Kemble made up for more personal incapacity than he had to answer for. His harshest tones in this part came steeped and dulcified in good humour. He made his defects a grace. His exact declamatory manner, as he managed it, only served to convey the points of his dialogue with more precision. It seemed to head the shafts to carry them deeper. Not one of his sparkling sentences was lost. I remember minutely how he delivered each in succession, and cannot by any effort imagine how any of them could be altered for the better. No man could deliver brilliant dialogue—the dialogue of Congreve or of Wycherley—because none understood it—half so well as John Kemble. His *Valentine*, in *Love for Love*, was, to my recollection, faultless. He flagged sometimes in the intervals of tragic passion. He would slumber over the level parts of an heroic character. His *Macbeth* has been known to nod. But he always seemed to me to be particularly alive to pointed and witty dialogue. The relax-

ing levities of tragedy have not been touched by any since him—the playful court-bred spirit in which he condescended to the players in Hamlet—the sportive relief which he threw into the darker shades of Richard—disappeared with him. He had his sluggish moods, his torpors—but they were the halting-stones and resting-places of his tragedy—politic savings, and fetches of the breath—husbandry of the lungs, where nature pointed him to be an economist—rather, I think, than errors of the judgment. They were, at worst, less painful than the eternal tormenting unappeasable vigilance, the ‘lidless dragon eyes,’ of present fashionable tragedy.

## VII. A BAD ACTOR

*Alexander Pope, who first appeared at Covent Garden in 1785, was a popular favourite in tragic parts for more than forty years. It is fair to say that Hazlitt seems to have thought slightly less ill of him than Hunt, from whose Critical Essays on Performers of the London Theatres (1807) this passage is taken.*

MR. POPE has not one requisite to an actor but a good voice, and this he uses so unmercifully on all occasions that its value is lost, and he contrives to turn it into a defect. His face is as hard, as immovable, and as void of meaning as an oak wainscot; his eyes, which should endeavour to throw some meaning into his vociferous declamation, he generally contrives to keep almost shut; and what would make another actor merely serious is enough to put him in a passion. In short, when Shakespeare wrote his description of ‘a robustious fellow, who tears a passion to tatters,’ one would suppose that he had been shown, by some supernatural means, the future race of actors, as Macbeth had a prophetic view of Banquo’s race, and that the robustious phantom was Mr. Pope. Here is an actor, then, without face, expression, or delivery, and yet this complication of negative qualities finds means to be clapped in the theatre and panegyricized in the newspapers. This inconsistency must be explained. As to the

newspapers, and their praise of this gentleman, I do not wish to repeat all the prevailing stories. Who does not know their corruptions? There is, however, an infallible method of obtaining a clap from the galleries, and there is an art known at the theatre by the name of *clap-trapping*, which Mr. Pope has shown great wisdom in studying. It consists in nothing more than gradually raising the voice as the speech draws to a conclusion, making an alarming outcry on the last four or five lines, or suddenly dropping them into a tremulous but energetic undertone, and with a vigorous jerk of the right arm rushing off the stage. All this astonishes the galleries; they are persuaded it must be something very fine, because it is so important and so unintelligible, and they clap for the sake of their own reputation. . . .

Mr. Pope, in short, may be considered as an example of the little value of a good voice unaccompanied with expression, while Mr. Kemble is a proof how much may be done by an expressive countenance and manner with the worst voice in the world.

## VIII. THE FAILURE OF A FAMOUS FARCE

*Charles Lamb's farce in two acts, Mr. H——, which turns on the embarrassments of a gentleman who is ashamed of his name, Hogsflesh, was produced at Drury Lane on Dec. 10, 1806. It is said that Lamb himself joined vigorously in the hissing which heralded its 'damnation'. —The first extract is from Hazlitt's essay 'On Great and Little Things', in Table Talk (1821-2), the second is in Lamb's letter to Thomas Manning, February 26, 1808.*

### I

WE often make life unhappy in wishing things to have turned out otherwise than they did, merely because that is possible to the imagination which is impossible in fact. I remember when L[amb]'s farce was damned (for damned it was, that's certain) I used to dream every night for a month after (and then I vowed I would plague myself no more about it) that it was revived at one of the Minor

or provincial theatres with great success, that such and such retrenchments and alterations had been made in it, and that it was thought *it might do at the other House* [Covent Garden]. I had heard indeed (this was told in confidence to L——) that *Gentleman* Lewis was present on the night of its performance, and said, that if he had had it, he would have made it, by a few judicious curtailments, ‘the most popular little thing that had been brought out for some time.’ How often did I conjure up in recollection the full diapason of applause at the end of the *Prologue*, and hear my ingenious friend in the first row of the pit roar with laughter at his own wit! Then I dwelt with forced complacency on some part in which it had been doing well: then we would consider (in concert) whether the long, tedious opera of the *Travellers*, which preceded it, had not tired people beforehand, so that they had not spirits left for the quaint and sparkling ‘wit skirmishes’ of the dialogue, and we all agreed it might have gone down after a Tragedy, except L—— himself, who swore he had no hopes of it from the beginning, and that he knew the name of the hero when it came to be discovered could not be got over.—Mr. H——, thou wert damned! Bright shone the morning on the play-bills that announced thy appearance, and the streets were filled with the buzz of persons asking one another if they would go to see Mr. H——, and answering that they would certainly: but before night the gaiety, not of the author, but of his friends and the town was eclipsed, for thou wert damned!

## II

I go creeping on since I was lamed with that cursed fall from off the top of Drury-Lane Theatre into the pit, something more than a year ago. However, I have been free of the house ever since, and the house was pretty free with me upon that occasion. Damn ’em, how they hissed! It was not a hiss neither, but a sort of frantic yell, like a congregation of mad geese, with roaring something like bears, mows and mops like apes, sometimes

snakes, that hiss'd me into madness. 'Twas like St. Anthony's temptations. Mercy on us, that God should give his favourite children, men, mouths to speak with, to discourse rationally, to promise smoothly, to flatter agreeably, to encourage warmly, to counsel wisely: to sing with, to drink with, and to kiss with: and that they should turn them into mouths of adders, bears, wolves, hyenas, and whistle like tempests, and emit breath through them like distillations of aspic poison, to asperse and vilify the innocent labours of their fellow-creatures who are desirous to please them! . . . Blind mouths! as Milton somewhere calls them.

## SECTION TEN

### BOOKS: WRITERS AND READERS

#### I. THE SPREAD OF TASTE FOR BOOKS: CIRCULATING LIBRARIES

*James Lackington, from whose Memoirs (1791) this passage comes, was a well-known bookseller; his shop in Finsbury Square, known as the 'Temple of the Muses', was for many years one of the sights of London.*

I CANNOT help observing, that the sale of books in general has increased prodigiously within the last twenty years. According to the best estimate I have been able to make, I suppose that more than four times the number of books are sold now [1791] than were sold twenty years since. The poorer sort of farmers, and even the poor country people in general, who before that period spent their winter evenings in relating stories of witches, ghosts, hobgoblins, &c. now shorten the winter nights by hearing their sons and daughters read tales, romances, &c. and on entering their houses, you may see Tom Jones, Roderic Random, and other entertaining books, stuck up in their bacon-racks, &c. If *John* goes to town with a load of hay, he is charged to be sure not to forget to bring home 'Peregrine Pickle's Adventures'; and when *Dolly* is sent to market to sell her eggs, she is commissioned to purchase 'The History of Pamela Andrews.' In short all ranks and degrees now READ. But the most rapid increase of the sale of books has been since the termination of the late war with America, &c. [in 1783].

A number of book-clubs are also formed in every part of England, where each member subscribes a certain sum quarterly to purchase books: in some of these clubs the



books after they have been read by all the subscribers, are sold among them to the highest bidders, and the money produced by such sale, is expended in fresh purchases, by which prudent and judicious mode, each member has it in his power to become possessed of the work of any particular author he may judge deserving a superior degree of attention ; and the members at large enjoy the advantage of a continual succession of different publications, instead of being restricted to a repeated perusal of the same authors ; which must have been the case with many, if so rational a plan had not been adopted. . . .

Circulating libraries have also greatly contributed towards the amusement and cultivation of the other sex ; by far the greatest part of ladies have now a taste for books.

‘—Learning, once the man’s exclusive pride,  
Seems verging fast towards the female side.’

It is true, that I do not with Miss W. ‘earnestly wish to see the distinction of sex confounded in society,’ not even with her exception, ‘unless where love animates the behaviour.’ I differ widely, however, from those gentlemen, who would prevent the ladies from acquiring a taste for books ; and as yet I have never seen any solid reason advanced, why ladies should not polish their understandings, and render themselves fit companions for men of sense.

## II. A SATIRE ON NEWSPAPERS

*Newspapers had existed from the seventeenth century ; but they became much more numerous towards the end of the eighteenth century. Of those mentioned in these lines from Crabbe’s The Newspaper (1785), The Public Ledger, Morning Post (which still exists), Morning Chronicle, and Morning Herald, had all been started since 1759. The British Gazette and Sunday Monitor, established 1780, was the first Sunday paper.*

SING, drooping Muse, the cause of thy decline ;  
Why reign no more the once-triumphant Nine ?  
Alas ! new charms the wavering many gain,  
And rival sheets the reader’s eye detain ;

A daily swarm, that banish every Muse,  
Come flying forth, and mortals call them NEWS :  
For these, unread, the noblest volumes lie ;  
For these, in sheets unsoil'd, the Muses die ;  
Unbought, unblest'd, the virgin copies wait  
In vain for fame, and sink, unseen, to fate. 10

Since, then, the town forsakes us for our foes,  
The smoothest numbers for the harshest prose ;  
Let us, with generous scorn, the taste deride,  
And sing our rivals with a rival's pride. . . .

I sing of NEWS, and all those vapid sheets  
The rattling hawker vends through gaping streets ;  
Whate'er their name, whate'er the time they  
fly,

Damp from the press, to charm the reader's eye :  
For, soon as morning dawns with roseate hue,  
The Herald of the morn arises too ; 20  
Post after Post succeeds, and all day long,  
Gazettes and Ledgers swarm, a noisy throng.  
When evening comes, she comes with all her  
train

Of Ledgers, Chronicles, and Posts again,  
Like bats, appearing, when the sun goes down,  
From holes obscure and corners of the town. . . .

No changing season makes their number less,  
Nor Sunday shines a sabbath on the press !  
Then lo ! the sainted Monitor is born,  
Whose pious face some sacred texts adorn : 30  
As artful sinners cloak the secret sin,  
To veil with seeming grace the guile within ;  
So Moral Essays on his front appear,  
But all is carnal business in the rear ;  
The fresh-coin'd lie, the secret whisper'd last,  
And all the gleanings of the six days past.  
With these retired, through half the Sabbath-day,  
The London-lounger yawns his hours away. . . .

But, Sunday pass'd, what numbers flourish then,  
What wond'rous labours of the press and pen ! 40

Diurnal most, some thrice each week affords,  
 Some only once,—O avarice of words !  
 When thousand starving minds such manna seek,  
 To drop the precious food but once a week.

### III. THE GROWTH OF PERIODICAL LITERATURE (*Favourable and Unfavourable Views*)

*A rapid growth in the number and importance of periodicals—weekly, monthly, and quarterly,—marked the opening of the nineteenth century. The Edinburgh and Quarterly Reviews and Blackwood's Magazine, which still survive, were founded between 1802 and 1817, and the lesser fry were innumerable.—The first extract is from the Noctes Ambrosianae, imaginary conversations between the 'Ettrick Shepherd' (James Hogg), 'Christopher North' (the writer, John Wilson), and others. It appeared in the same year (1829) with the second extract, which is from Southey's Sir Thomas More.*

#### I

*Shepherd.* This seems to me to be the only age of the world, sir, in which poetry and creetishism ever gaed, like sisters, hand in hand, encircled wi' a wreath o' flowers.

*North.* Now—all our philosophical criticism—or nearly all—is periodical; and fortunate that it is so both for taste and genius. It is poured daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, into the veins of the people, mixing with their very heart-blood. Nay, it is like the very air they breathe.

*Shepherd.* Do you mean to say, 'if they have it not, they die?'

*North.* Were it withheld from them now, their souls would die or become stultified. Formerly, when such disquisitions were confined to quarto or octavo volumes, in which there was nothing else, the author made one great effort, and died in book birth—his offspring sharing often the doom of its unhappy parent. If it lived, it was forthwith immured in a prison called a library—an uncirculating library—and was heard no more of in this world, but by certain worms.

*Shepherd.* A' the warld's hotchin' wi' authors noo, like

a pond wi' powheads [tadpoles]. Out sallies Christopher North frae amang the reeds, like a pike, and crunches them in thousands.

*North.* Our current periodical literature teems with thought and feeling, James,—with passion and imagination. There was Gifford, and there are Jeffrey, and Southey, and Campbell, and Moore, and Bowles, and Sir Walter, and Lockhart, and Lamb, and Wilson, and De Quincey, and the four Coleridges, S. T. C., John, Hartley, and Derwent, and Croly, and Maginn, and Mackintosh, and Cunningham . . . and Carlyle, and Macaulay, and the two Moirs, and Jerdan, and Talfourd, and Bowring, and North, and Hogg, and Tickler, and twenty—forty—fifty—other crack contributors to the Reviews, Magazines, and Gazettes, who have said more tender, and true, and fine, and deep things in the way of criticism, than ever was said before since the reign of Cadmus, ten thousand times over,—not in long, dull, heavy, formal, prosy theories,—but flung off-hand, out of the glowing mint—a coinage of the purest ore—and stamped with the inefaceable impress of genius. Who so elevated in intellectual rank as to be entitled to despise such a Periodical Literature?

*Shepherd.* Nae leevin' man—nor yet dead ane.

## II

OUR journals, indeed, have been the great corrupters of our style, and continue to be so. Men who write in newspapers, and magazines, and reviews, write for present effect; in most cases this is as much their natural and proper aim, as it would be in public speaking; but when it is so they consider, like public speakers, not so much what is accurate or just, either in matter or manner, as what will be acceptable to those whom they address. Writing also under the excitement of emulation and rivalry, they seek, by all the artifices and efforts of an ambitious style, to dazzle their readers; and they are wise in their generation, experience having shown that common minds

are taken by glittering faults, both in prose and verse, as larks are with looking-glasses.

In this school it is that most writers are now trained ; and after such training, anything like an easy and natural movement is as little to be looked for in their compositions as in the step of a dancing-master. To the vices of style which are thus generated, there must be added the inaccuracies inevitably arising from haste, when a certain quantity of matter is to be supplied for a daily or weekly publication which allows of no delay,—the slovenliness that confidence as well as fatigue and inattention will produce,—and the barbarisms which are the effect of ignorance, or that smattering of knowledge which serves only to render ignorance presumptuous. These are the causes of corruption in our current style ; and when these are considered, there would be ground for apprehending that the best writings of the last century might become obsolete in the process of time, if we had not in our Liturgy and our Bible a standard from which it will not be possible wholly to depart.

#### IV. CONTROVERSY IN PERIODICALS

*The tone of criticism in the periodicals of the day was too often grossly personal, and even scurrilous. We need only allude to the attacks in the Quarterly and Blackwood's on Hunt, Hazlitt, Keats, and Shelley, and to the hard knocks which Hunt and Hazlitt gave in return, to show that literary and political differences were often confounded. Hazlitt discusses the question in this passage from an essay 'On Reading New Books', in the Monthly Magazine, July 1827.*

AN old friend of mine, when he read the abuse and bilingsgate poured out in certain Tory publications, used to congratulate himself upon it as a favourable sign of the times, and of the progressive improvement of our manners. Where we now called names, we formerly burnt each other at a stake ; and all the malice of the heart flew to the tongue and vented itself in scolding, instead of crusades and *auto-da-fés*—the nobler revenge of our ancestors for a difference of opinion. An author



now libels a prince ; and, if he takes the law of him or throws him into gaol, it is looked upon as a harsh and ungentlemanly proceeding. He, therefore, gets a dirty Secretary to employ a dirty bookseller, to hire a set of dirty scribblers, to pelt him with dirt and cover him with blackguard epithets—till he is hardly in a condition to walk the streets. This is hard measure, no doubt, and base ingratitude on the part of the public, according to the imaginary dignity and natural precedence which authors take of kings ; but the latter are men, and will have their revenge where they can get it. They have no longer their old summary appeal—their will may still be good—to the dungeon and the dagger. Those who ‘ speak evil of dignities ’ may, therefore, think themselves well off in being merely *sent to Coventry* ; and, besides, if they have *pluck*, they can make a Parthian retreat, and shoot poisoned arrows behind them.

## V. THE POETRY OF THE AGE: ‘HOW IT STRIKES A CONTEMPORARY’

*This passage (from an article on Mrs. Hemans in the Edinburgh Review in 1829) fairly represents average taste and opinion during the later stages of the ‘ Romantic Revival ’. The writer, Jeffrey, was for many years editor of the Edinburgh. Most of his prophecies have been belied by the event ; and they show in a very curious fashion what a wide difference there may be between an age’s view of itself and the ‘ judgement of posterity ’.*

SINCE the beginning of our critical career we have seen a vast deal of beautiful poetry pass into oblivion, in spite of our feeble efforts to recall or retain it in remembrance. The tuneful quartos of Southey are already little better than lumber : and the rich melodies of Keats and Shelley, and the fantastical emphasis of Wordsworth, and the plebian pathos of Crabbe, are melting fast from the field of our vision. The novels of Scott have put out his poetry. Even the splendid strains of Moore are fading into distance and dimness, except where they have been married to immortal music ; and the blazing star of Byron himself



is receding from its place of pride. We need say nothing of Milman, and Croly, and Atherstone, and Hood, and a legion of others, who, with no ordinary gifts of taste and fancy, have not so properly survived their fame, as been excluded by some hard fatality, from what seemed their just inheritance. The two who have the longest withstood this rapid withering of the laurel, and with the least marks of decay on their branches, are Rogers and Campbell ; neither of them, it may be remarked, a voluminous writer, and both distinguished rather for the fine taste and consummate elegance of their writings, than for that fiery passion, and disdainful vehemence, which seemed for a time to be so much more in favour with the public.

## SECTION ELEVEN

### EDUCATION: SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY

#### I. A DAY SCHOOL IN LONDON

*Conducted by a Mr. William Bird, 'Teacher of Languages and Mathematics'. It was Charles Lamb's first and his sister Mary's only school; Charles left in 1782, at the age of seven, to become a 'Bluecoat Boy' at Christ's Hospital. Many years later he wrote these recollections in a paper entitled 'Captain Starkey' (1825).*

THE school-room stands where it did, looking into a discoloured dingy garden in the passage leading from Fetter Lane into Bartlett's Buildings. It is still a School, though the main prop, alas ! has fallen so ingloriously ; and bears a Latin inscription over the entrance in the Lane, which was unknown in our humbler times. Heaven knows what 'languages' were taught in it then ; I am sure that neither my Sister nor myself brought any out of it, but a little of our native English. By 'mathematics,' reader, must be understood 'cyphering.' It was in fact a humble day-school, at which reading and writing were taught to us boys in the morning, and the same slender erudition was communicated to the girls, our sisters, &c. in the evening. . . . I well remember Bird. He was a squat, corpulent, middle-sized man, with something of the gentleman about him, and that peculiar mild tone—especially while he was inflicting punishment—which is so much more terrible to children, than the angriest looks and gestures. Whippings were not frequent ; but when they took place, the correction was performed in a private room adjoining, whence we could only hear the complaints, but saw nothing.

This heightened the decorum and the solemnity. But the ordinary public chastisement was the bastinado, a stroke or two on the palm with that now almost obsolete weapon—the ferule. A ferule was a sort of flat ruler, widened at the inflicting end into a shape resembling a pear,—but nothing like so sweet—with a delectable hole in the middle, to raise blisters, like a cupping-glass. I have an intense recollection of that disused instrument of torture—and the malignancy, in proportion to the apparent mildness, with which its strokes were applied. The idea of a rod is accompanied with something ludicrous ; but by no process can I look back upon this blister-raiser with any thing but unmingled horror.—To make him look more formidable—if a pedagogue had need of these heightenings—Bird wore one of those flowered Indian gowns, formerly in use with schoolmasters ; the strange figures upon which we used to interpret into hieroglyphics of pain and suffering. But boyish fears apart—Bird I believe was in the main a humane and judicious master.

O, how I remember our legs wedged in to those uncomfortable sloping desks, where we sat elbowing each other—and the injunctions to attain a free hand, unattainable in that position ; the first copy I wrote after, with its moral lesson ‘ Art improves Nature ’ ; the still earlier pothooks and the hangers, some traces of which I fear may yet be apparent in this manuscript ; the truant looks side-long to the garden, which seemed a mockery of our imprisonment ; the prize for best spelling, which had almost turned my head, and which to this day I cannot reflect upon without a vanity, which I ought to be ashamed of—our little leaden inkstands, not separately subsisting, but sunk into the desks ; the bright, punctually-washed morning fingers, darkening gradually with another and another ink-spot : what a world of little associated circumstances, pains, and pleasures, mingling their quotas of pleasure, arise at the reading of those few simple words—‘ Mr. William Bird, an eminent Writer and Teacher of languages and mathematics in Fetter Lane, Holborn ’ !

## II. TRUE EDUCATION NOT BOOK-LEARNING

*The conception of education as a duty of the State was only beginning during our period ; and projects for universal elementary education (which matured in 1870) met with strong opposition from many quarters, including the redoubtable Cobbett (in Cottage Economy, 1821).*

*Education means breeding up, bringing up, or rearing up ; and nothing more. This includes every thing with regard to the mind as well as the body of a child ; but, of late years, it has been so used as to have no sense applied to it but that of book-learning, with which, nine times out of ten, it has nothing at all to do. It is, indeed, proper, and it is the duty of all parents to teach, or cause to be taught, their children as much as they can of books, after, and not before, all the measures are safely taken for enabling them to get their living by labour, or for providing them a living without labour, and that, too, out of the means obtained and secured by the parents out of their own income. The taste of the times is, unhappily, to give to children something of book-learning, with a view of placing them to live, in some way or other, upon the labour of other people. . . .*

It gave me singular pleasure to see a boy, just turned of *six*, helping his father to *reap* in Sussex, this last summer. He did little, to be sure, but it was *some thing*. His father set him into the ridge at a great distance before him, and when he came up to the place he found a *sheaf* cut ; and those who know what it is to reap, know how pleasant it is to find now and then a sheaf cut ready to their hand. It was no small thing to see a boy fit to be trusted with so dangerous a thing as a reap-hook in his hands, at an age when 'young masters' have nursery maids to cut their victuals for them, and to see that they do not fall out of the window, tumble down stairs, or run under carriage-wheels or horses' bellies. Was not this father discharging his duty by this boy much better than he would have been by sending him to a place called a *school* ? The boy

is in a school here, and an excellent school too : the school of useful labour. I must hear a great deal more than I ever have heard, to convince me that teaching children to *read* tends so much to their happiness, their independence of spirit, their manliness of character, as teaching them to *reap*. . . . Observations of this sort can, in my opinion, never be too often repeated ; especially at a time when all sorts of mad projects are on foot, for what is falsely called *educating* the people, and when some would do this by a *tax* that would compel the single man to give part of his earnings to teach the married man's children to read and write.

### III. CHRIST'S HOSPITAL, OR THE 'BLUE-COAT SCHOOL'

*Christ Hospital, as it is more correctly called, has produced, between the sixteenth and the twentieth centuries, some of our most eminent men. At the close of the eighteenth century its most celebrated pupils were Charles Lamb, S. T. Coleridge, and Leigh Hunt, who wrote in 1847, for his Autobiography, these recollections of his schooldays fifty years before.*

PERHAPS there is not a foundation in the country so truly English, taking that word to mean what Englishmen wish it to mean—something solid, unpretending, of good character, and free to all. More boys are to be found in it, who issue from a greater variety of ranks, than in any school in the kingdom ; and as it is the most various, so it is the largest, of all the free schools. Nobility do not go there, except as boarders. Now and then a boy of a noble family may be met with, and he is reckoned an interloper, and against the charter ; but the sons of poor gentry and London citizens abound ; and with them an equal share is given to the sons of tradesmen of the very humblest description, not omitting servants. I would not take my oath—but I have a strong recollection, that in my time there were two boys, one of whom went up into the drawing-room to his father, the master of the

house ; and the other, down into the kitchen to *his* father, the coachman. One thing, however, I know to be certain, and it is the noblest of all, namely, that the boys themselves (at least it was so in my time) had no sort of feeling of the difference of one another's ranks out of doors. The cleverest boy was the noblest, let his father be who he might. Christ Hospital is a nursery of tradesmen, of merchants, of naval officers, of scholars ; it has produced some of the greatest ornaments of their time ; and the feeling among the boys themselves is, that it is a medium between the patrician pretension of such schools as Eton and Westminster, and the plebian submission of the charity-schools. . . .

There were five schools ; a grammar-school, a mathematical or navigation-school (added by Charles the Second, through the zeal of Mr. Pepys), a writing, a drawing, and a reading-school. Those who could not read when they came on the foundation, went into the last. There were few in the last-but-one, and I scarcely know what they did, or for what object. The writing-school was for those who were intended for trade and commerce ; the mathematical, for boys who went as midshipmen into the naval and East India service ; and the grammar-school for such as were designed for the Church, and to go to the University. The writing-school was by far the largest ; and, what is very curious (it has been altered since), all the schools were kept quite distinct ; so that a boy might arrive at the age of fifteen in the grammar-school, and not know his multiplication-table ; which was the case with myself. Nor do I know it to this day ! Shades of Horace Walpole, and Lord Lyttelton ! come to my assistance, and enable me to bear the confession : but so it is. . . .

Our dress was of the coarsest and quaintest kind, but was respected out of doors, and is so. It consisted of a blue drugget gown, or body, with ample skirts to it ; a yellow vest underneath in winter-time ; small-clothes of Russia duck ; worsted yellow stockings ; a leathern girdle ;



and a little black worsted cap, usually carried in the hand. I believe it was the ordinary dress of children in humble life during the reign of the Tudors. We used to flatter ourselves that it was taken from the monks ; and there went a monstrous tradition, that at one period it consisted of blue velvet with silver buttons. It was said, also, that during the blissful era of the blue velvet, we had roast mutton for supper, but that the small-clothes not being then in existence, and the mutton suppers too luxurious, the eatables were given up for the ineffables. A malediction, at heart, always followed the memory of him who had taken upon himself to decide so preposterously. To say the truth, we were not too well fed at that time, either in quantity or quality ; and we could not enter with our hungry imaginations into these remote philosophies. . . .

Our routine of life was this. We rose to the call of a bell, at six in summer, and seven in winter ; and after combing ourselves, and washing our hands and faces, went, at the call of another bell, to breakfast. All this took up about an hour. From breakfast we proceeded to school, where we remained till eleven, winter and summer, and then had an hour's play. Dinner took place at twelve. Afterwards a little play till one, when we again went to school, and remained till five in summer and four in winter. At six was the supper. We used to play after it in summer till eight. In winter, we proceeded from supper to bed. On Sundays, the school-time of the other days was occupied in church, both morning and evening ; and as the Bible was read to us every day before every meal, and on going to bed, besides prayers and graces, we rivalled the monks in the religious part of our duties.

#### IV. A FLOGGING SCHOOLMASTER: BOYER OF CHRIST'S HOSPITAL

*The Rev. James Boyer was the Upper Master in the Grammar (i.e., Classical) School in the time of Lamb, Coleridge, and Hunt. He figures prominently in the well-known essay by Lamb (in Elia) from which this extract comes.*

THOUGH sufficiently removed from the jurisdiction of Boyer, we were near enough (as I have said) to understand a little of his system. We occasionally heard sounds of the *Ululantes*, and caught glances of Tartarus. . . . He had two wigs, both pedantic, but of differing omen. The one serene, smiling, fresh powdered, betokening a mild day. The other, an old discoloured, unkempt, angry caxon, denoting frequent and bloody execution. Woe to the school, when he made his morning appearance in his *passy*, or *passionate wig*. No comet expounded surer.—J. B. had a heavy hand. I have known him double his knotty fist at a poor trembling child (the maternal milk hardly dry upon its lips) with a ‘Sirrah, do you presume to set your wits at me?’—Nothing was more common than to see him make a headlong entry into the school-room, from his inner recess, or library, and, with turbulent eye, singling out a lad, roar out, ‘Od’s my life, Sirrah,’ (his favourite adjuration) ‘I have a great mind to whip you,’—then, with as sudden a retracting impulse, fling back into his lair—and, after a cooling lapse of some minutes (during which all but the culprit had totally forgotten the context) drive headlong out again, piecing out his imperfect sense, as if it had been some Devil’s Litany, with the expletory yell—‘*and I WILL, too.*’—In his gentler moods, when the *ravidus furor* was assuaged, he had resort to an ingenious method, peculiar, for what I have heard, to himself, of whipping the boy, and reading the Debates, at the same time ; a paragraph, and a lash between ; which in those times, when parliamentary oratory was most at a height and flourishing in these realms, was not calculated

to impress the patient with a veneration for the diffuser graces of rhetoric. . . .

Perhaps we cannot dismiss him better than with the pious ejaculation of C[oleridge] when he heard that his old master was on his death-bed—'Poor J. B. !—may all his faults be forgiven ; and may he be wafted to bliss by little cherub boys, all head and wings, with no *bottoms* to reproach his sublunary infirmities.'

## V. THE EDUCATION OF GIRLS

*Boarding-schools and 'Seminaries' for young ladies became very numerous towards the end of the eighteenth century.—Hazlitt, in this paragraph from an essay 'On the Conversation of Lords' (New Monthly Magazine, 1826), paints rather too rosy a picture of female learning ; but he shows correctly enough that the stress was put upon 'elegant accomplishments' rather than on solid learning or practical training.*

THERE is no young lady of fashion in the present day, scarce a boarding-school girl, that is not mistress of as many branches of knowledge as would set up half-a-dozen literary hacks. In lieu of the sampler and the plain-stitch of our grandmothers, they have so many hours for French, so many for Italian, so many for English grammar and composition, so many for geography and the use of the globes, so many for history, so many for botany, so many for painting, music, dancing, riding, &c. One almost wonders how so many studies are crammed into the twenty-four hours ; or how such fair and delicate creatures can master them without spoiling the smoothness of their brows, the sweetness of their tempers, or the graceful simplicity of their manners. A girl learns French (not only to read, but to speak it) in a few months, while a boy is as many years in learning to construe Latin. Why so ? Chiefly because the one is treated as a *bagatelle* or agreeable relaxation ; the other as a serious task or necessary evil. Education, a very few years back, was looked upon as a hardship, and enforced by menaces and blows, instead of being carried on (as now) as an amusement and under the garb of pleasure, and with the allurements of

self-love. It is found that the products of the mind flourish better and shoot up more quickly in the sunshine of good-humour and in the air of freedom, than under the frowns of sullenness, or the shackles of authority. 'The labour we delight in physics pain.'

## VI. A YOUNG LADY'S EDUCATION AT A BOARDING-SCHOOL

*From a satirico-nonsensical story in verse, Love and Lunacy, written about 1838 by the famous humorist Thomas Hood. Allowing for comic exaggeration, it is probably nearer the truth than the last extract; both of them make an interesting comparison with the next passage.*

ELLEN, like most misses in the land,

Had sipped sky blue, through certain of her teens,  
At one of those establishments which stand

In highways, byeways, squares, and village greens;

'Twas called 'The Grove,'—a name that always means

Two poplars stand like sentries at the gate—

Each window had its close Venetian screens  
And Holland blind, to keep in a cool state  
The twenty-four Young Ladies of Miss Bate.

But when the screens were left unclosed by chance, 10

The blinds not down, as if Miss B. were dead,

Each upper window to a passing glance

Revealed a little dimity white bed;

Each lower one a cropp'd or curly head;

And thrice a week, for soul's and health's economies

Along the road the twenty-four were led,  
Like coupled hounds, whipped in by two she-dominies  
With faces rather graver than Melpomene's.

And thus their studies they pursued:—On Sunday,

Beef, collects, batter, texts from Dr. Price; 20

Mutton, French, pancakes, grammar—of a Monday;

Tuesday—hard dumplings, globes, Chapone's Advice;

Wednesday—fancy-work, rice-milk (no spice);

Thursday—pork, dancing, currant-bolsters, reading ;

Friday—beef, Mr. Butler, and plain rice ;

Saturday—scraps, short lessons and short feeding,

Stocks, back-boards, hash, steel-collars, and good breeding.

From this repertory of female learning,

Came Ellen once a quarter, always fatter !

To gratify the eyes of parents yearning.

30

'Twas evident in bolsters, beef, and batter,

Hard dumplings, and rice-milk, she did not smatter,

But heartily, as Jenkins says, 'demollidge' ;

But as for any learning, not to flatter,

As often happens when girls leave their college,

She had done nothing but grow out of knowledge.

## VII. A SCHOOLGIRL'S DIARY

*Extracts from an actual diary, kept by Miss Firth, aged fourteen, a pupil at a well-known boarding-school for young ladies in Yorkshire. The Headmistress ('My Governess') was Miss Mangnall, who wrote a famous text-book of history and 'general knowledge', Mangnall's Questions.—Most of Miss Firth's odd expressions explain themselves ; but it should be noticed that 'the ladies' means the girls. Similarly the 'great ladies' are the seniors and the 'little ladies' the juniors ; and fellow-pupils as well as teachers are usually called 'Miss'.*

- April 4, 1812. The ladies sung hymns in the evening.
8. Some of the ladies had 30 verses for having things in the black hall cupboard.
  9. I began of my rugs.
  12. Several of the ladies were sent to bed for losing at spelling.
  19. All the drawers trunks and pockets were searched for some cake that was taken out of Miss Hither's drawer.
  21. We had all geography on the globe.
  27. We had dictionary excused. Miss Outhwaite made an unfortunate speech.
  30. Several of the Ladies were sent to bed for losing at spelling. I was one of them.

- May 2. We did not all say catechism till after tea.  
 3. Those who did not lose at spelling or dictionary walked in the ringfield. I was one who did not lose.  
 4. Miss Outhwaite was sent to bed at 7 for having her feet within the fender.

\* \* \* \* \*

*June* 4, 1812. We had a concert and a great deal of company, between 30 and 40 Ladies and Gentlemen. The schoolroom was lighted up with 66 candles. I played in a trio and a Glee.

5. We laid in the morning.  
 10. All our clothes came from the wash.  
 11. We were packed up. [Holidays till July 26.]

*July* 27. We eat strawberries in the garden.  
 29. The Manchester Ladies came.

- Aug.* 1. Miss Coppock had a fit. We got strawberries in the garden.  
 2. A. had a task for a slop at breakfast.  
 4. Miss Marshall and Miss Dixon fought.  
 5. We went into the garden to eat currants.  
 6. I was put into the first class of Music.  
 7. I was put into the second class of Geography.  
 14. We were threatened to be sent to bed at 5 o'clock if there were not less noise in the writing-room.  
 16. Frank caught two owls.  
 21. Our class of Geography were 2 hours looking for the Emperor of Persia's name. My Governess told us it was Mohomet.  
 24. My Governess took Mary Horsfall, Lydia Wilkinson, and I to Wakefield. We drank tea at Mr. Smith's, and came back in a chaise.  
 30. Miss T. Marshall was sent to bed at eight for impertinence to Mr. Willis. The great ladies had gooseberries.



Sept. 1. I got 10 verses for a slop at breakfast. We were all sent to bed without tea for making a noise in the writing-room.

4. The little ladies had apples.

\* \* \* \* \*

Dec. 2, 1812. We expected a holiday, but were disappointed.

4. Miss M'Cumming was whipped and sent to Coventry for telling a fib.

5. We laid in the morning and had preserves to supper. I was very sick.

9. We had a holiday in the afternoon and had all cake. Our class of Geography supped with my Governess.

\* \* \* \* \*

Feb. 13, 1813. We laid in bed till the chimnies were swept.

19. I got the names of the English kings.

Mar. 3. It was Ash Wednesday. We had tarts to dinner. My Governess read *Rokeby* in the evening.

6. I began to learn ancient Geography.

7. I read thoughts on Education.

8. I began of reading ancient History.

\* \* \* \* \*

May 11, 1813. A man came to rob the pigeon-house, but my Governess called out to him.

19. We had a brain-day in Geography [i.e., an oral test]. I had 7 mistakes, which was the least of any one.

20. Our boxes were packed up for varnishing.

22. My Governess gave me an Inkstand and Miss Lockwood a silver knife for answering well at Geography.

24. The coughs had treacle-posset.

25. I began of taking medicine.

30. Miss Eliza fainted in church.

June 1. We had a long argument on conscience.

12. I left school.

## VIII. WORDSWORTH GOES TO CAMBRIDGE

*Wordsworth was a student at S. John's College, Cambridge, from 1787 to 1791, when he graduated. He took little interest in the somewhat narrow field of official studies, and gained no academic distinctions. These recollections are from The Prelude, Book III, written in 1804.*

It was a dreary morning when the wheels  
 Rolled over a wide plain o'erhung with clouds,  
 And nothing cheered our way till first we saw  
 The long-roofed chapel of King's College lift  
 Turrets and pinnacles in answering files,  
 Extended high above a dusky grove.

Advancing, we espied upon the road  
 A student clothed in gown and tasselled cap,  
 Striding along as if o'ertasked by Time,  
 Or covetous of exercise and air; 10  
 He passed—nor was I master of my eyes  
 Till he was left an arrow's flight behind.  
 As near and nearer to the spot we drew,  
 It seemed to suck us in with an eddy's force.  
 Onward we drove beneath the Castle; caught  
 While crossing Magdalene Bridge, a glimpse of Cam;  
 And at the *Hoop* alighted, famous Inn. . . .

As if the change  
 Had waited on some Fairy's wand, at once  
 Behold me rich in monies, and attired 20  
 In splendid garb, with hose of silk, and hair  
 Powdered like rimy trees, when frost is keen.  
 My lordly dressing-gown, I pass it by,  
 With other signs of manhood that supplied  
 The lack of beard.—The weeks went roundly on,  
 With invitations, suppers, wine and fruit,  
 Smooth housekeeping within, and all without  
 Liberal, and suiting gentleman's array.

The Evangelist St. John my patron was:  
 Three Gothic courts are his, and in the first 30  
 Was my abiding-place, a nook obscure;

Right underneath, the College kitchens made  
 A humming sound, less tuneable than bees,  
 But hardly less industrious ; with shrill notes  
 Of sharp command and scolding intermixed.  
 Near me hung Trinity's loquacious clock,  
 Who never let the quarters, night or day,  
 Slip by him unproclaimed, and told the hours  
 Twice over with a male and female voice.  
 Her pealing organ was my neighbour too ;  
 And from my pillow, looking forth by light  
 Of moon or favouring stars, I could behold  
 The antechapel where the statue stood  
 Of Newton with his prism and silent face,  
 The marble index of a mind for ever  
 Voyaging through strange seas of Thought, alone.

40

Of College labours, of the Lecturer's room  
 All studded round, as thick as chairs could stand,  
 With loyal students faithful to their books,  
 Half-and-half idlers, hardy recusants,  
 And honest dunces—of important days,  
 Examinations, when the man was weighed  
 As in a balance ! of excessive hopes,  
 Tremblings withal, and commendable fears,  
 Small jealousies, and triumphs good or bad—  
 Let others that know more speak as they know.  
 Such glory was but little sought by me,  
 And little won. . . .

50

Companionships,  
 Friendships, acquaintances, were welcome all.  
 We sauntered, played, or rioted ; we talked  
 Unprofitable talk at morning hours ;  
 Drifted about along the streets and walks,  
 Read lazily in trivial books, went forth  
 To gallop through the country in blind zeal  
 Of senseless horsemanship, or on the breast  
 Of Cam sailed boisterously, and let the stars  
 Come forth, perhaps without one quiet thought.

60

Such was the tenour of the second act

In this new life. Imagination slept,  
 And yet not utterly. I could not print  
 Ground where the grass had yielded to the steps  
 Of generations of illustrious men,  
 Unmoved. I could not always lightly pass  
 Through the same gateways, sleep where they had  
     slept,  
 Wake where they waked, range that inclosure old,  
 That garden of great intellects, undisturbed.

## IX. IN PRAISE OF OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE

*The admission of Dissenters and the widening of the curriculum were the chief changes in the English Universities during the nineteenth century. This passage expresses the reasoned opposition of a conservative mind ; it is from Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk (1819), by J. G. Lockhart, who was educated at Glasgow and Oxford.*

THOSE great and venerable institutions have both existed from the very commencement of the English monarchy, and have been gradually strengthened and enriched into their present condition, by the piety and the munificence of many successive generations of kings and nobles. They are frequented by those only who may be called upon at some future period to discharge the most sacred and most elevated duties of English citizenship ; and the magnificence of the establishments themselves carries down a portion of its spirit into the humblest individual who connects himself with them. The student is lodged in a palace ; and when he walks abroad, his eyes are fed on every side with the most splendid assemblages of architectural pomp and majesty which our island can display. He dines in a hall whose lofty compartments are occupied with the portraiture of illustrious men, who of old underwent the same discipline in which he is now engaged, amidst the same appropriate and impressive accompaniments of scene and observance. He studies in his closet the same books which have, for a thousand years, formed the foundation of the intellectual character of English-

men. In the same chapel wherein the great and good men of England were wont to assemble, he listens, every evening and every morning, to the same sublime music and sublimer words, by which their devotion was kindled, and their faith sustained. He walks under the shadow of the same elms, plantains, and sycamores, beneath whose branches the thoughtful steps of Newton, or Bacon, Locke, and Milton, have sounded. . . .

That the practical usefulness of these institutions would be in any respect improved by any considerable change in their course of studies, I am far from believing ; even were I certain that it would be so, I should still be very far from wishing to see such a change adopted. I am satisfied abundantly that they should continue as they are ; and, not having much faith in the new doctrine of the perfectibility of human nature, I doubt whether, let them be altered as they might, the men of their production would be much altered for the better. I do not think that at our time of day in national existence, it is at all wise or desirable to begin learning new fashions. The world is not in its infancy : And where is the nation the world has produced, which can present a more glorious array of great and holy names than ours ? To me this is a sufficient proof, that we have not all the while been stumbling in the dark, without the rays of the true lamp to enlighten us in our progress. . . .

Even in regard to many of those peculiarities of our system, which are the most easy and the most favoured marks of the wit of its enemies, I am persuaded that a compliance with what at first sight seems to be the most liberal spirit, would, in the end, be found productive of any thing but fortunate effects. It is very easy, for example, to stigmatize the rules which exclude, from more or less of our privileges, all who are not members of our national church, with the names of bigotry, intolerance, and superstition. It should be remembered, however, that these regulations were the work of men, whom even our bitterest revilers would not dare to insult with such

language ; and till we see some good reason to be ashamed of them, we may be pardoned, at least, if we refuse to be entirely ashamed of their work. If it be fitting that we should have a National Church, I think it is equally fitting that the Church should have the National Universities. These do not profess to monopolize all the means of instruction ; the number of great names, in all departments, which have grown up without their sphere of protection, would be more than enough to give such pretensions the lie, were they so audacious as to set them forth. But they profess to educate a certain number of persons, of a certain class, in a certain set of principles, which have been connected with that class throughout all the best years of our history—and which, through the persons of that class in former times, have become identified with our national existence, and must everywhere be recognized as entering largely and powerfully into the formation of our national character. In a word, they are designed to keep up the race of English gentlemen.

## X. AN ATTACK ON THE UNIVERSITIES

*Hazlitt, himself the product of a Dissenting Academy (Hackney College), here makes a bitter but partly justified attack on the political bias and lack of intellectual vigour at Oxford and Cambridge in his day. The extract is from an essay 'On Corporate Bodies', in Table Talk (1821-2).*

AGE does not improve the morality of public bodies. They grow more and more tenacious of their idle privileges and senseless self-consequence. They get weak and obstinate at the same time. Those, who belong to them, have all the upstart pride and pettifogging spirit of their present character ingrafted on the venerableness and superstitious sanctity of ancient institutions. . . .

The great resorts and seats of learning often outlive in this way the intention of the founders, as the world outgrows them. They may be said to resemble antiquated coquets of the last age, who think every thing ridiculous



and intolerable but what was in fashion when they were young, and yet are standing proofs of the progress of taste, and the vanity of human pretensions. Our universities are, in a great measure, become cisterns to hold, not conduits to disperse knowledge. The age has the start of them; that is, other sources of knowledge have been opened since their formation, to which the world have had access, and have drunk plentifully at those living fountains, but from which they are debarred by the tenor of their charter, and as a matter of dignity and privilege. They have grown poor, like the old grandees in some countries, by subsisting on the inheritance of learning, while the people have grown rich by trade. They are too much in the nature of *fixtures* in intellect: they stop the way in the road to truth; or at any rate (for they do not themselves advance) they can only be of service as a check-weight on the too hasty and rapid career of innovation. All that has been invented or thought in the last two hundred years they take no cognisance of, or as little as possible; they are above it; they stand upon the ancient land-marks, and will not budge: whatever was not known when they were first endowed, they are still in profound and lofty ignorance of. Yet in that period how much has been done in literature, arts, and science, of which (with the exception of mathematical knowledge, the hardest to gainsay or subject to the trammels of prejudice and barbarous *ipse dixits*) scarce any trace is to be found in the authentic modes of study, and legitimate inquiry, which prevail at either of our Universities!

## SECTION TWELVE

### DOMESTIC LIFE: DRESS: FASHIONS

#### I. PROGRESS IN PERSONAL COMFORT

*A letter to a newspaper, by Sydney Smith, written in 1843; the changes mentioned had all occurred since the beginning of the century.*

IT is of some importance at what period a man is born. A young man, alive at this period, hardly knows to what improvements of human life he has been introduced; and I would bring before his notice the following eighteen changes which have taken place in England since I first began to breathe in it the breath of life—a period amounting now to nearly seventy-three years.

Gas was unknown: I groped about the streets of London in all but the utter darkness of a twinkling oil lamp, under the protection of watchmen in their grand climacteric, and exposed to every species of depredation and insult.

I have been nine hours in sailing from Dover to Calais before the invention of steam. It took me nine hours to go from Taunton to Bath, before the invention of railroads, and I now go in six hours from Taunton to London! In going from Taunton to Bath, I suffered between 10,000 and 12,000 severe contusions, before stone-breaking Macadam was born.

I paid £15 in a single year for repairs of carriage-springs on the pavement of London; and I now glide without noise or fracture, on wooden pavements.

I can walk, by the assistance of the police, from one end of London to the other, without molestation; or, if tired, get into a cheap and active cab, instead of those

cottages on wheels, which the hackney coaches were at the beginning of my life.

I had no umbrella! They were little used, and very dear. There were no waterproof hats, and *my* hat has often been reduced by rains into its primitive pulp.

I could not keep my smallclothes in their proper place, for braces were unknown. If I had the gout, there was no colchicum. If I was bilious, there was no calomel. If I was attacked by ague, there was no quinine. There were filthy coffee houses instead of elegant clubs. Game could not be bought. Quarrels about uncommuted tithes were endless. The corruption of Parliament, before Reform, infamous. There were no banks to receive the savings of the poor. The Poor Laws were gradually sapping the vitals of the country; and whatever miseries I suffered, I had no post to whisk my complaints for a single penny to the remotest corners of the empire; and yet, in spite of all these privations, I lived on quietly, and am now ashamed that I was not more discontented, and utterly surprised that all these changes and inventions did not occur two centuries ago.

I forgot to add, that as the basket of stage coaches, in which luggage was then carried, had no springs, your clothes were rubbed all to pieces; and that even in the best society one third of the gentlemen at least were always drunk.

## II. MEALS AND MEAL-TIMES

*In his Letters from England (1807) Southey assumes the mask of an imaginary Spanish traveller, 'Don Manuel Alvarez Espriella', who is here giving his first impressions of domestic life in England.*

THE breakfast-table is a cheerful sight in this country: porcelain of their own manufactory, which excels the Chinese in elegance of form and ornament, is ranged on a Japan waiter, also of the country fabric; for here they imitate every thing. The mistress sits at the head of the board, and opposite to her the boiling water smokes and

sings in an urn of Etruscan shape. The coffee is contained in a smaller vase of the same shape, or in a larger kind of tea-pot, wherein the grain is suspended in a bag ; but nothing is so detestable as an Englishman's coffee. The washing of our after-dinner cups would make a mixture as good ; the infusion is just strong enough to make the water brown and bitter. . . . They make amends however by the excellence of their tea, which is still very cheap, though the ministry, in violation of an explicit bargain, increased the tax upon it four fold, during the last war. This is made in a vessel of silver, or of a fine black porcelain : they do not use boiled milk with it, but cream instead in its fresh state ; which renders it a very delightful beverage. They eat their bitter bread in various ways, either in thin slices, or toasted, or in small loaves, along with butter, which is the best thing in the country.

The dinner hour is usually five : the labouring part of the community dine at one, the highest ranks at six, seven, or even eight. The quantity of meat which they consume is astonishing ! I verily believe that what is drest for one dinner here, would supply the same number of persons in Spain for a week, even if no fast-days intervened. Every where you find both meat and vegetables in the same crude and insipid state. The potatoe appears at table all the year round : indeed the poor subsist so generally upon this root, that it seems surprising how they could have lived before it was introduced from America. Beer is the common drink. They take less wine than we do at dinner, and more after it ; but the custom of sitting for hours over the bottle, which was so prevalent of late years, has been gradually laid aside, as much from the gradual progress of the taxes as of good sense. Tea is served between seven and eight, in the same manner as at breakfast, except that we do not assemble round the table. Supper is rather a ceremony than a meal ; but the hour afterwards, over our wine and water, or spirits, is the pleasantest in the day.

## III. TEA ON A WINTER EVENING

*From Cowper, The Task, Book IV.*

Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast,  
Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,  
And while the bubbling and loud-hissing urn  
Throws up a steamy column, and the cups  
That cheer but not inebriate, wait on each,  
So let us welcome peaceful evening in.

## IV. BEER VERSUS TEA

*In Cobbett's Cottage Economy (1821).*

BEFORE I proceed to give any directions about brewing, let me mention some of the inducements to do the thing. In former times, to set about to show to Englishmen that it was good for them to brew beer in their houses, would have been as impertinent as gravely to insist that they ought to endeavour not to lose their breath ; for, in those times (only forty years ago), to have a *house* and not to brew was a rare thing indeed. MR. FELLMAN, an old man and a large farmer, in Sussex, has recently given in evidence, before a Committee of the House of Commons, this fact ; that, *forty years ago*, there was not a labourer in his parish that did not *brew his own beer* ; and that *now* there is *not one that does it*, except by chance the malt be given him. . . .

It must be evident to every one, that the practice of tea drinking must render the frame feeble and unfit to encounter hard labour or severe weather, while, as I have shown, it deducts from the means of replenishing the belly and covering the back. Hence succeeds a softness, an effeminacy, a seeking for the fireside, a lurking in the bed, and, in short, all the characteristics of idleness, for which, in this case, real want of strength furnishes an apology. The tea drinking fills the public-house, makes the frequenting of it habitual, corrupts boys as soon as they are

able to move from home, and does little less for the girls, to whom the gossip of the tea-table is no bad preparatory school for the brothel. At the very least, it teaches them idleness. The everlasting dawdling about with the slops of the tea-tackle gives them a relish for nothing that requires strength and activity. When they go from home, they know how to do nothing that is useful. To brew, to bake, to make butter, to milk, to rear poultry ; to do any earthly thing of use they are wholly unqualified. To shut poor young creatures up in manufactories is bad enough : but there, at any rate, they do something that is useful ; whereas the girl that has been brought up merely to boil the tea-kettle, and to assist in the gossip inseparable from the practice, is a mere consumer of food, a pest to her employer, and a curse to her husband, if any man be so unfortunate as to fix his affections upon her.

But is it in the power of any man, any good labourer who has attained the age of fifty, to look back upon the last thirty years of his life, without cursing the day in which tea was introduced into England ? Where is there such a man, who cannot trace to this cause a very considerable part of all the mortifications and sufferings of his life ? When was he ever *too late* at his labour ; when did he ever meet with a frown, with a turning off, and pauperism on that account, without being able to trace it to the tea-kettle ? When reproached with lagging in the morning, the poor wretch tells you that he will make up for it by *working during his breakfast-time* ! I have heard this a hundred and a hundred times over. He was up time enough ; but the tea-kettle kept him lolling and lounging at home ; and now instead of sitting down to a breakfast upon bread, bacon, and beer, which is to carry him on to the hour of dinner, he has to force his limbs along under the sweat of feebleness, and at dinner-time to swallow his dry bread, or slake his half-feverish thirst at the pump or the brook. To the wretched tea-kettle he has to return at night, with legs hardly sufficient to



maintain him : and thus he makes his miserable progress towards that death which he finds ten or fifteen years sooner than he would have found it had he made his wife brew beer instead of making tea.

## V. WINE-DRINKING : PITT AND PORSON

*Hard drinking was a general vice until Queen Victoria made sobriety fashionable. Many statesmen besides Pitt were notorious consumers of port ; and men of learning were often no better, though Richard Porson, the eminent and eccentric Greek scholar, is an extreme instance. These anecdotes are from the Table-Talk of Samuel Rogers (1856).*

DURING his boyhood, Pitt was very weakly ; and his physician, Addington (Lord Sidmouth's father), ordered him to take port wine in large quantities : the consequence was that, when he grew up, he could not do without it. Lord Grenville has seen him swallow a bottle of port in tumblerfuls, before going to the House. This, together with his habit of eating late suppers (indigestible cold veal pies, &c.), helped undoubtedly to shorten his life. Huskisson, speaking to me of Pitt, said that his hands shook so much that, when he helped himself to salt, he was obliged to support the right hand with the left. . . .

Tooke used to say that ' Porson would drink ink rather than not drink at all.' Indeed, he would drink anything. He was sitting with a gentleman, after dinner, in the chambers of a mutual friend, a Templar, who was then ill and confined to bed. A servant came into the room, sent thither by his master for a bottle of embrocation which was on the chimney-piece. ' I drank it an hour ago,' said Porson.

When Hoppner the painter was residing in a cottage a few miles from London, Porson, one afternoon, unexpectedly arrived there. Hoppner said that he could not offer him dinner, as Mrs. H. had gone to town, and had carried with her the key of the closet which contained the wine. Porson, however, declared that he would be content with a mutton-chop, and beer from the next ale-

house ; and accordingly stayed to dine. During the evening Porson said, ' I am quite certain that Mrs. Hoppner keeps some nice bottle, for her private drinking, in her own bedroom ; so, pray, try if you can lay your hands on it.' His host assured him that Mrs. H. had no such secret stores ; but Porson insisting that a search should be made, a bottle was at last discovered in the lady's apartment, to the surprise of Hoppner and the joy of Porson, who soon finished its contents, pronouncing it to be the best gin he had tasted for a long time. Next day, Hoppner, somewhat out of temper, informed his wife that Porson had drunk every drop of her concealed dram. ' Drunk every drop of it ! ' cried she : ' my God, it was spirits of wine for the lamp ! '

## VI. THE VICISSITUDES OF TOBACCO-SMOKING

*From a pleasant essay in Leigh Hunt's Wishing Cap Papers, ' Coffee Houses and Smoking ' (1826). The smoking clergyman was the writer's father.*

SMOKING has had its vicissitudes, as well as other fashions. In Elizabeth's day, when it first came up, it was a high accomplishment : James (who liked it none the better for its being of Raleigh's invention) indignantly refused it the light of his countenance : in Charles's time it was dashed out by the cannon ; lips had no leisure for it under Charles the Second : the clubs and the Dutch brought it back again with King William : it prevailed more or less during the reign of the first two Georges ; grew thin, and died away under George the Third ; and has lately reappeared, with a flourish of Turkish pipes, and through the milder medium of the cigar, under the auspices of his successor.

The last smoker I recollect among those of the old school, was a clergyman. He had seen the best society, and was a man of the most polished behaviour. This did not hinder him from taking his pipe every evening before he went to bed. He sat in his arm chair, his back gently

bending, his knees a little apart, his eyes placidly inclined towards the fire : and delighted, in the intervals of puff, to recount anecdotes of the Marquis of Rockingham and ' my Lord North.' The end of his recreation was announced to those who had gone to bed, by the tapping of the bowl of his pipe upon the hob, for the purpose of emptying it of its ashes. Ashes to ashes, head to bed. It is a pity that the long day of life cannot always terminate as pleasantly.

## VII. OLD-FASHIONED FASHIONS

*In his old age Rogers (who lived until 1855) looks back half a century to the 1780's.—The personal use of the umbrella was rare before 1800.*

THE head-dresses of the ladies, during my youth, were of a truly preposterous size. I have gone to Ranelagh in a coach with a lady who was obliged to sit upon a stool placed in the bottom of the coach, the height of her head-dress not allowing her to occupy the regular seat.

Their tight lacing was equally absurd. Lady Crewe told me that, on returning home from Ranelagh, she has rushed up to her bedroom, and desired her maid to cut her laces without a moment's delay, for fear she should faint.

I recollect when it was still the fashion for gentlemen to wear swords. I have seen Haydn play at a concert in a tie-wig, with a sword at his side.

During my youth umbrellas were far from common. At that time every gentleman's family had *one umbrella*—a huge thing, made of coarse cotton—which used to be taken out with the carriage, and which, if there was rain, the footman held over the ladies' heads, as they entered, or alighted from, the carriage.

## VIII. A MAN OF FASHION'S DAY

*Byron here describes his hero (in Don Juan, Canto XI, 1824) as moving in London society and passing his time much as the poet himself, about 1812, had done.*

His morns he passed in business—which dissected,  
 Was, like all business, a laborious nothing  
 That leads to lassitude, the most infected  
 And Centaur Nessus garb of mortal clothing,  
 And on our sofas makes us lie dejected,  
 And talk in tender horrors of our loathing  
 All kinds of toil, save for our country's good—  
 Which grows no better, though 'tis time it should.

His afternoons he passed in visits, luncheons,  
 Lounging and boxing ; and the twilight hour 10  
 In riding round those vegetable puncheons  
 Called ' Parks,' where there is neither fruit nor flower  
 Enough to gratify a bee's slight munchings ;  
 But after all it is the only ' bower '  
 (In Moore's phrase) where the fashionable fair  
 Can form a slight acquaintance with fresh air.

Then dress, then dinner, then awakes the world !  
 Then glare the lamps, then whirl the wheels, then roar  
 Through street and square fast flashing chariots hurled  
 Like harnessed meteors ; then along the floor 20  
 Chalk mimics painting ; then festoons are twirled ;  
 Then roll the brazen thunders of the door,  
 Which opens to the thousand happy few  
 An earthly Paradise of *Or Molu*.

There stands the noble hostess, nor shall sink  
 With the three-thousandth curtsy ; there the waltz,  
 The only dance which teaches girls to think,  
 Makes one in love even with its very faults.

Saloon, room, hall, o'erflow beyond their brink,

And long the latest of arrivals halts, 30

'Midst royal dukes and dames condemned to climb,

And gain an inch of staircase at a time.

Thrice happy he who, after a survey

Of the good company, can win a corner,

A door that's *in* or boudoir *out* of the way,

Where he may fix himself like small 'Jack Horner,'

And let the Babel run round as it may,

And look on as a mourner, or a scorner,

Or an approver, or a mere spectator,

Yawning a little as the night grows later. 40

## IX. A WOMAN OF FASHION'S DAY

*Recounted by one of her elders—Horace Walpole, in a letter to Miss Berry, May 26, 1791.*

I LIVE so little in the world, that I do not know the present generation by sight: for, though I pass by them in the streets, the hats with valences, the folds above the chin of the ladies, and the dirty shirts and shaggy hair of the young men, who have levelled nobility almost as much as the mobility in France have, have confounded all individuality. Besides, if I did go to public places and assemblies, which my going to roost earlier prevents, the bats and owls do not begin to fly abroad till far in the night, when they begin to see and be seen. However, one of the empresses of fashion, the Duchess of Gordon, uses fifteen or sixteen hours of her four-and-twenty. I heard her journal of last Monday. She first went to Handel's music in the Abbey; she then clambered over the benches, and went to [Warren] Hastings's trial in the Hall; after dinner, to the play; then to Lady Lucan's assembly; after that to Ranelagh, and returned to Mrs. Hobart's faro-table; gave a ball herself in the evening of that morning,

into which she must have got a good way ; and set out for Scotland the next day. Hercules could not have achieved a quarter of her labours in the same space of time.

## X. THE 'SPORTING' GIRL

*The much-talked-of 'modern girl' who swears and drinks cocktails is not really modern at all—witness this satirical sketch from W. M. Praed's verses To Julia (1821).*

You know Camilla : o'er the plain  
 She guides the fiery hunter's rein ;  
 First in the chase she sounds the horn,  
 Trampling to earth the farmer's corn,  
 That hardly deigned to bend its head  
 Beneath her namesake's lighter tread.  
 With Bob the Squire, her polished lover,  
 She wields the gun, or beats the cover ;  
 And then her steed !—why ! every clown  
 Tells how she rubs Smolensko down, 10  
 And combs the mane, and cleans the hoof,  
 While wondering hostlers stand aloof.

At night, before the Christmas fire,  
 She plays backgammon with the squire ;  
 Shares in his laugh, and in his liquor,  
 Mimics her father, and the vicar ;  
 Swears at the grooms without a blush ;  
 Dips in her ale the captured brush ;  
 Until,—her father duly tired—  
 The parson's wig as duly fired— 20  
 The dogs all still—the squire asleep,  
 And dreaming of his usual leap,—  
 She leaves the dregs of white and red,  
 And lounges languidly to bed. . . .

And this is bliss !—the story runs,  
 Camilla never wept—save once :  
 Yes ! once indeed Camilla cried—  
 'Twas when her dear Blue-stockings died.



## XI. FASHIONS IN DRESS AND THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE

*Hazlitt on 'Fashion', in the Edinburgh Magazine, September 1818.*

IN all this chopping and changing, it is generally one folly that drives out another; one trifle that by its specific levity acquires a momentary and surprising ascendancy over the last. There is no striking deformity of appearance or behaviour that has not been made 'the sign of an inward and invisible grace.' Accidental imperfections are laid hold of to hide real defects. Paint, patches, and powder, were at one time synonymous with health, cleanliness, and beauty. Obscenity, irreligion, small oaths, tippling, gaming, effeminacy in the one sex and Amazon airs in the other, any thing is the fashion while it lasts. In the reign of Charles II, the profession and practice of every species of extravagance and debauchery were looked upon as the indispensable marks of an accomplished cavalier. Since that period the court has reformed, and has had rather a rustic air. Our belles formerly overloaded themselves with dress: of late years, they have affected to go almost naked,—'and are, when unadorned, adorned the most.' The women having left off stays, the men have taken to wear them, if we are to believe the authentic *Memoirs of the Fudge Family*. The Niobe head is at present buried in the *poke* bonnet, and the French milliners and *marchands des modes* have proved themselves an overmatch for the Greek sculptors, in matters of taste and costume.

A very striking change has, however, taken place in dress of late years, and some progress has been made in taste and elegance, from the very circumstance, that, as fashion has extended its empire in that direction, it has lost its power. While fashion in dress included what was costly, it was confined to the wealthier classes: . . . but, when the appearing in the top of the mode no longer depended on the power of purchasing certain expensive

articles of dress, or the right of wearing them, the rest was so obvious and easy, that any one who chose might cut as coxcombical a figure as the best. It became a matter of mere affectation on the one side, and gradually ceased to be made a matter of aristocratic assumption on the other. 'In the grand carnival of this our age,' among other changes this is not the least remarkable, that the monstrous pretensions to distinctions in dress have dwindled away by tacit consent, and the simplest and most graceful have been in the same request with all classes. In this respect, as well as some others, 'the age is grown so pickled, the peasant's toe comes so near the courtier's heel, it galls his kibe'; a lord is hardly to be distinguished in the street from an attorney's clerk; and a plume of feathers is no longer mistaken for the highest distinction in the land.

## XII. A DANDY'S COSTUME

*An accurate description of fashionable male attire about 1820, from Luttrell's Letters to Julia.*

As, when steam has lent it motion  
 'Gainst wind and tide, across the ocean,  
 The merest tub will far outstrip  
 The progress of the lightest ship  
 That ever on the waters glided,  
 If with an engine unprovided;  
 Thus Beaus, in person and in mind  
 Excelled by those they leave behind,  
 On, through the world, undaunted, press,  
 Backed by the mighty power of Dress;  
 While folks less confident than they  
 Stare, in mute wonder,—and give way.

10

Charles was a master, a professor  
 Of this great art—a first-rate dresser  
 Armed at all points, from head to foot,  
 From rim of hat to tip of boot.

Above so loose, below so braced,  
 In chest exuberant, and in waist  
 Just like an hour-glass or a wasp,  
 So tightened, he could scarcely gasp. 20  
 Cold was the nymph who did not dote  
 Upon him, in his new-built coat ;  
 Whose heart could parry the attacks  
 Of those voluminous Cossacks,  
 Those trowsers named from the barbarians  
 Nursed in the Steppes—the Crim-Tartarians,  
 Who, when they scour a country, under  
 Those ample folds conceal their plunder.  
 How strange their destiny has been !  
 Promoted, since the year fifteen, 30  
 In honour of these fierce allies,  
 To grace our British legs and thighs.  
 But fashion's tide no barrier stems ;  
 So the *Don* mingles with the *Thames* !  
 Yet weak, he felt, were the attacks  
 Of his voluminous Cossacks ;  
 In vain to suffocation braced  
 And bandaged was his wasp-like waist ;  
 In vain his buckram-wadded shoulders  
 And chest astonished all beholders ; 40  
 Wear any coat he might, 'twas fruitless ;  
 Those shoes, those very boots were bootless  
 Whose tops ('twas he enjoined the mixture)  
 Are moveable, and spurs a fixture ;  
 All was unprofitable, flat,  
 And stale without a smart CRAVAT,  
 Muslined enough to hold its starch ;  
 That last key-stone of Fashion's arch !

## XIII. LADIES' FASHIONS IN PARIS

*From Tom Moore's amusing little book of satirical 'squibs', The Fudge Family in Paris (1818). Miss Biddy Fudge and her brother Bob are on holiday in Paris. Prominent among its attractions (which she is here describing in a letter to her sister) is the establishment of Mme. Le Roi, the 'celebrated mantua-maker'.*

—BUT, Lord, such a place ! and then, DOLLY, my dresses, My gowns, so divine !—there's no language expresses, Except just the *two* words 'superbe,' 'magnifique,' The trimmings of that which I had home last week ! It is call'd—I forget—*à la*—something which sounded Like *alicampagne*—but, in truth, I'm confounded And bother'd, my dear, 'twixt that troublesome boy's (BOB'S) cookery language, and Madame LE ROI'S : What with fillets of roses, and fillets of veal, Things *garni* with lace, and things *garni* with eel, 10 One's hair and one's cutlets both *en papillote*, And a thousand more things I shall ne'er have by rote, I can scarce tell the diff'rence, at least as to phrase, Between beef *à la Psyche* and curls *à la braise*.— But, in short, dear, I'm trick'd out quite *à la Française*, With my bonnet—so beautiful !—high up and poking, Like things that are put to keep chimnies from smoking.

## XIV. STRICTURES ON ENGLISH LADIES' COSTUME

*A later phase of fashion is indicated in these paragraphs from an essay by Leigh Hunt on English and French Females, written in 1834.*

WITHOUT exception, the English women wear the prettiest faces and the ugliest dresses of any in the known world. A Hottentot hangs her sheepskin *caross* on her shoulders with more effect,—and it is from what I see every day of my life that I come to this conclusion.

I was the other day at a large shop at the west end of the town, where, if anywhere, we may expect to meet with favourable specimens of our countrywomen. Not a

bit of it. There were a couple of French ladies there dressed smartly and tidily, one in blue and the other in rose-coloured silk, with snug little *scutty* bonnets guiltless of tawdry ribbons or dingy plumes ; and great was their astonishment at beholding the nondescript figures which ever and anon passed by. First came gliding out of her carriage, with a languishing air, a young Miss all ringlets down to the knees—feathers drooping on one side of her bonnet, flowers on the other, and an immense Brussels veil (or some such trash) hanging behind ; her gown pinned to her back like rags on a Guy Fawkes ; a large warming-pan of a watch, secured round her neck by as many chains, gold, silver, and pinchbeck, as an Italian brigand ;—with divers other articles, as handkerchief, boas, &c., which however costly and beautiful individually, formed altogether an unbecoming and cook-maidish whole. Then came the two old ladies—but I give *them* up, as too far gone in their evil ways of dressing to hope for amelioration. *Ditto* for the widows in their hideous black bonnets, with a foot and a half of black crape tacked to each side like wings to a paper kite. . . . I looked from one end to the other of the crowded shop, in hopes of finding some happy lady to retrieve the honour of her country—but in vain. All wore the same ugly garment more akin to a night-shift than a gown ; the same warming-pan watch and chains ; the same fly-flapping bonnet with bunches of ugly ribands. Altogether they formed an awkward contrast to the ‘ tight, reg’lar-built French craft.’

## XV. ROMANCE AND DOMESTIC LIFE: THE COMPLAINT OF A LONDON MISS

*By Thomas Hood ; written about 1830.*

O DAYS of old, O days of Knights,  
Of tourneys and of tilts,  
When love was balk’d and valour stalk’d  
On high heroic stilts—

Where are ye gone ?—adventures cease,  
 The world gets tame and flat,—  
 We've nothing now but New Police—  
 There's no Romance in that !

I wish I ne'er had learn'd to read,  
 Or Radcliffe how to write ; 10  
 That Scott had been a boor on Tweed,  
 And Lewis cloister'd quiet !  
 Would I had never drunk so deep  
 Of dear Miss Porter's vat ;  
 I only turn to life, and weep—  
 There's no Romance in that ! . . .

Love—even love—goes smoothly on  
 A railway sort of track—  
 No flinty sire, no jealous Don !  
 No hearts upon the rack ; 20  
 No Polydore, no Theodore—  
 His ugly name is Mat,  
 Plain Matthew Pratt and nothing more—  
 There's no Romance in that ! . . .

He wears no plumes or Spanish cloaks,  
 Or long sword hanging down ;  
 He dresses much like other folks,  
 And commonly in brown ;  
 His collar he will not discard,  
 Or give up his cravat, 30  
 Lord Byron-like—he's not a Bard—  
 There's no Romance in that !

He's rather bald, his sight is weak,  
 He's deaf in either drum ;  
 Without a lisp he cannot speak,  
 But then—he's worth a plum.  
 He talks of stocks and three per cents.  
 By way of private chat,  
 Of Spanish Bonds, and shares, and rents,—  
 There's no Romance in that ! . . . 40



I've long had Pa's and Ma's consent,  
 My aunt she quite approves,  
 My Brother wishes joy from Kent,  
 None try to thwart our loves ;  
 On Tuesday reverend Mr. Mace  
 Will make me Mrs. Pratt,  
 Of Number Twenty, Sussex Place—  
 There's no Romance in that !

## XVI. A PROPHECY

*Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose ' is the moral of these verses  
 by William Maginn.*

IN this year eighteen hundred  
 And twenty and two,  
 There are plenty of false ones  
 And plenty of true :  
 There are brave men and cowards,  
 And bright men and asses ;  
 There are lemon-faced prudes,  
 There are kind-hearted lasses.  
 He who quarrels with this  
 Is a man of no sense,  
 For so 'twill continue  
 An hundred years hence.

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